

**SPANISH EMPIRE:** 10 BATTLES THAT BUILT A SUPERPOWER

# HISTORY *of* WAR



## GALLIPOLI REMEMBERED

Blunder & bloodshed in the clash of empires

## AUSTERLITZ

How Napoleon crushed Europe

## BLACK WATCH HERO

VC veteran of Britain's forgotten conflict

## COMMUNIST REBELLION

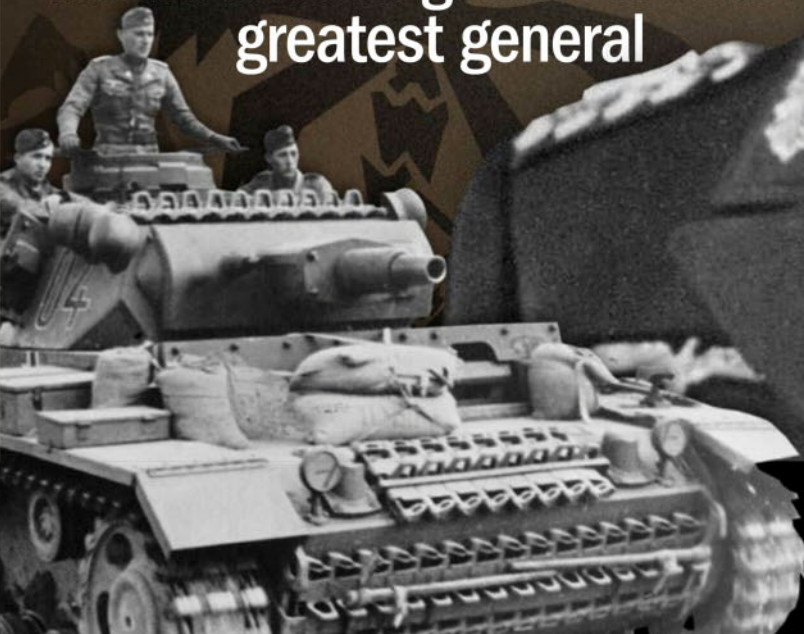
The truth behind Nepal's guerilla war



**ERWIN ROMMEL**

# DESERT FOX

The battlefield genius of Hitler's greatest general



**PLUS:**

- Anglo-Afghan War ⚔
- Daring Desert Rats ⚔
- Blitzkrieg tactics ⚔

**PANZER VS T-70**  
WWII ARMOUR GOES  
HEAD-TO-HEAD

**GULF WAR JET**  
THE SUPERSONIC  
SEPECAT JAGUAR



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ISSUE 014





# GALLIPOLI 1915



**ANZAC**

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, part of a seaborne assault on entrenched positions on Turkey's Aegean Coast. Despite acts of great bravery, poor leadership and limited territorial gains meant that the surviving ANZAC troops were evacuated by the close of the year.



**Waltzing Matilda**

"Nearly blew us right back to Australia. But the band played Waltzing Matilda as we stopped to bury our slain. We buried ours and the Turks buried theirs. Then we started all over again". This poignant ballad, originally written and recorded by Eric Bogle, was famously covered by The Pogues.



**Lancashire Landing**

The 1st Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers landed at dawn on 'W' Beach, Cape Helles, 25 April 1915. Under heavy machine-gun fire the unit suffered 50% casualties. By 07.15 the survivors had established a beachhead. Six Victoria Crosses were awarded to officers and men of the Battalion, forever known as 'Six VCs before Breakfast'.

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**HMS Agamemnon**

HMS Agamemnon, a Royal Navy battleship took part in the huge naval contribution to the Gallipoli campaign, seeking to weaken Ottoman Turkish operations with bombardments from the sea followed by delivering the beach landings of Australian, New Zealand, British, Indian, Canadian and French forces.

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# Welcome

**“Sweat saves blood, blood saves lives,  
but brains save both”**

– Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel

**F**ield Marshal Rommel’s dominance on the battlefields of World War II has often been summed up in three simple words, attributed to him: “Sturm, schwung, wucht”; storm, momentum, force.

His victories, as well as an almost chivalric approach to his enemies, puts him up among the most gifted and celebrated commanders ever.

Another undeniably superior leader in the field, Napoleon’s battlefield prowess won him an entire empire. At Austerlitz, arguably his greatest battle, he snatched victory from a numerically dominant foe, leaving Europe on its knees.

But both these men are generals from bygone eras. With drones,

satellites, and even robots taking their place in the ranks of the world’s military today, could it be that superior tech, rather than tactics, will decide the wars of the future, more than ever before?



*Tim*

**Tim Williamson**  
Deputy Editor



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## CONTRIBUTORS



**JACK GRIFFITHS**

Jack’s been listening to *Waltzing Matilda* this month, putting him in the right mood for his Gallipoli feature, recounting the ill-fated attack by the ANZACS (p.28). To cheer himself up, he went to look at a SEPECAT Jaguar fighter jet (p.86).



**MATTHEW MOSS**

Blogger and history buff Matt has been delving into the story of Erwin Rommel’s rise and fall (p.54). Tracking his career took Matt to the fields of France, the deserts of North Africa and the beaches of Normandy – sadly for him only vicariously.



**WILL LAWRENCE**

Will has been keeping a strict diet of paella and tapas this month, as he engrossed himself in the rich history of the Spanish Empire (p.70), from its origins during the Reconquista to the shores of South America and beyond.

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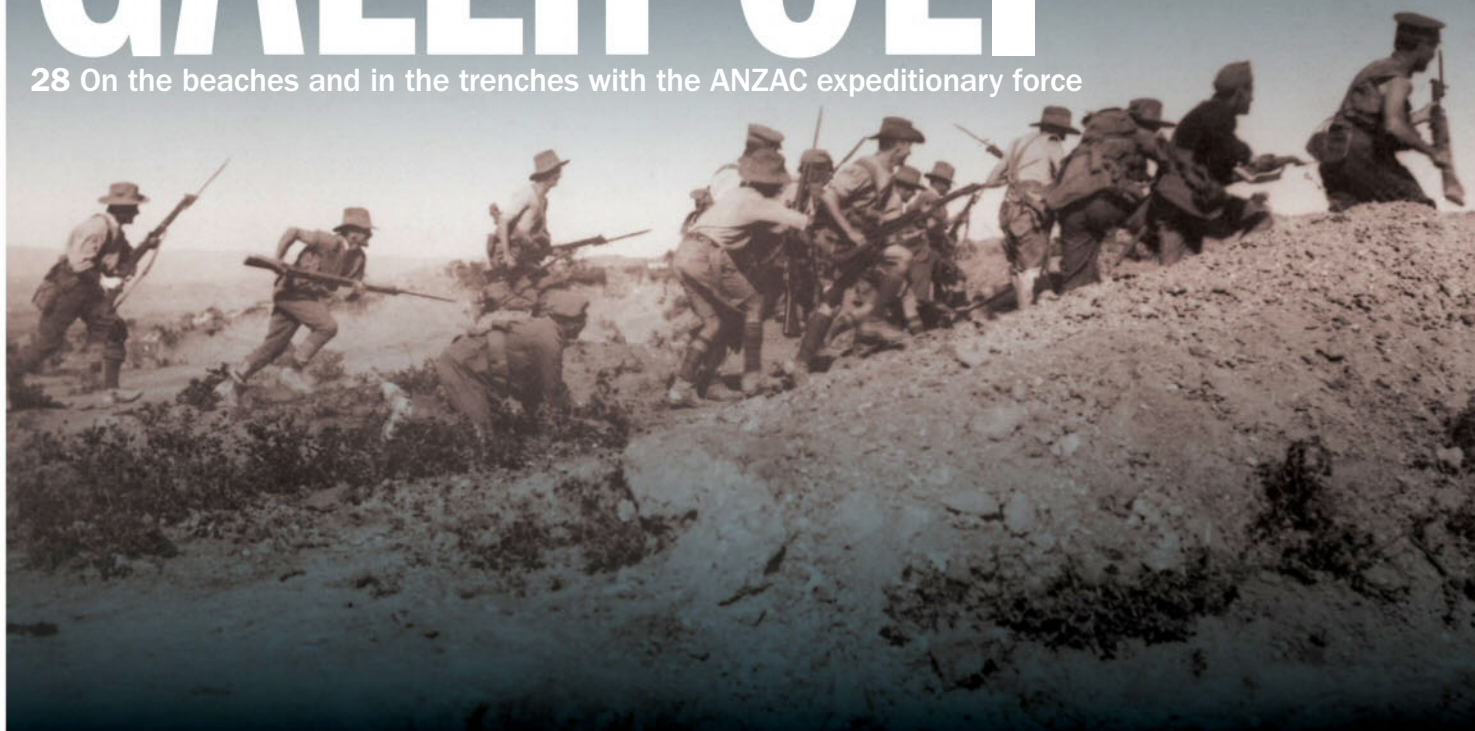


*HMS Queen Elizabeth takes Allied troops to the Dardanelles, where they will launch their first attacks of the Gallipoli campaign*



# GALLIPOLI

28 On the beaches and in the trenches with the ANZAC expeditionary force



## Frontline

### 16 **Light tanks**

The lightly armed and armoured smaller siblings of the last century's metal monsters

### 18 **Head to Head**

The Nazi Panzer I and Soviet T-70 face off, but which was the superior machine?

### 20 **World of light tanks**

Tracked terrors of the globe and their most famous clashes on global battlefields

### 22 **Famous Operation**

A British Army Gurkha is pitted against a French Foreign Legionary

### 24 **Anatomy of a Panzer II**

A glimpse at the innards of this metallic marvel that won the Battle of France

### 26 **Tank heroes**

Crews and commanders that have stamped their own marks in the history of tank warfare

## Subscribe

52 Never miss an issue, get your History of War before it's in the shops and save a bundle while you're at it!

### Spain in 10 battles

70 The story of the life and death of a superpower



### Second Anglo-Afghan War

48 The origins of this colonial clash in the east



# AUSTERLITZ

40 Enter the battle of the three emperors



## THE DESERT FOX

54 Follow the rise and fall of one of Nazi Germany's greatest generals: Erwin Rommel



## SEPECAT Jaguar

86 Get inside this multipurpose Gulf War jet fighter

## PANZER II

24 Inside the German Blitzkrieg machine



### 06 Reader Survey

Tell us what you think of the magazine and be part of our Reader Panel

### 08 WAR IN FOCUS

Stunning imagery from throughout history, showing war in all its jaw-dropping detail

### 28 Gallipoli: Clash of empires

British ANZAC forces take on the Ottoman Empire in this infamous WWI campaign

### 40 GREAT BATTLES Austerlitz

The Grande Armée is outnumbered, but victory will see Europe kneel to Napoleon

### 48 TRIGGER POINT Second Anglo-Afghan War

Long before the battle against insurgent terror, there was this colonial tussle

### 54 Rommel: Genius of the Desert Fox

The greatest Nazi general's war, from the African desert to the shores of Normandy

### 66 VC HERO Bill Speakman

This Black Watch soldier used anything he could to stave off hours of attacks

### 70 Spain in 10 battles

The rise and fall of this European superpower, told in 10 crucial clashes

### 80 BRIEFING Nepalese Civil War

Tom Farrell looks back at the Maoist rebellion that ravaged Nepal

### 86 OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK SEPECAT Jaguar

Jack Griffiths explores the ins and outs of this multi-purpose Anglo-French fighter

### 92 Book reviews

A selection of the latest military titles waiting for you on the shelves

### 98 WAR IN NUMBERS Gallipoli

The stats don't lie in this sombre round-up of a truly catastrophic WWI failure



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# HISTORY of WAR

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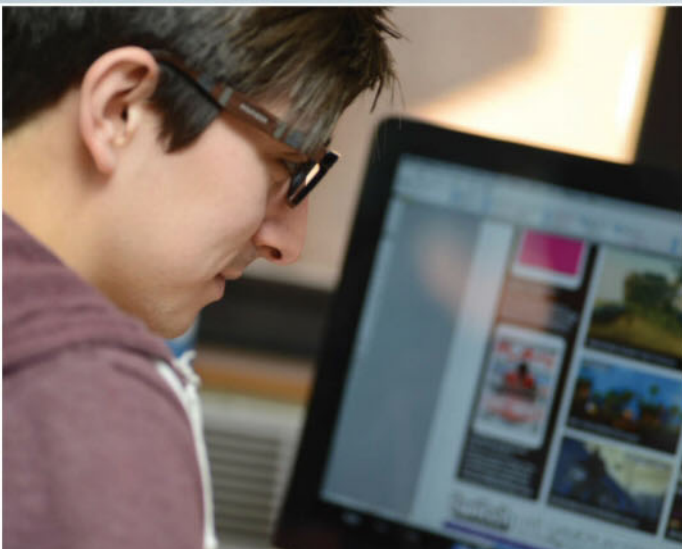


Working on History of War, it's great to learn something new every day. But we mainly love to hear what interests you most, be it Napoleon's battle strategy, or the inner workings of a Panzer II. By answering just a few questions, you could be selected to join our first-ever History of War panel – get involved!

**Tim Williamson**  
Deputy Editor



Join our panel and help us make the magazine even better!

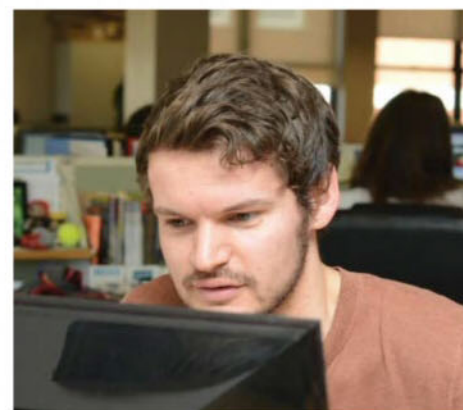






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# **WAR**<sub>in</sub> **FOCUS**

## **LET'S KICK UP SOME DUST**

*Taken 13 April 2012*

Members of the 4th Tank Division of the US Marine Corps speed down a dirt road in an M1 A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. This was taken during one of the annual African Lion military exercises, an initiative organised between the US and the Kingdom of Morocco. The exercise sees command operations, live-fire testing, manoeuvres and aerial refuelling demonstrations. In 2012, 1,200 members of the US military travelled to various regions of Morocco to take part in the exercise, which was led by the US Marine Corps Forces Africa.







# WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS

## DRIVE BACK THE GERMANS!

*Taken c. 1918*

French troopers under General Gouraud hone their machine guns among the ruins of a cathedral near the Marne river. The Second Battle of Marne, 1918, was the last German offensive of World War I. Many of the troops facing the German attacks were members of the American Expeditionary Force, which numbered 250,000 men. Under French command during the battle, the Americans suffered more than 30,000 casualties during the bitter defence and counter-offensives. In particular, the American 3rd division proved tenacious in its defence and prevented the German 7th army from advancing.











## **WAR**<sub>in</sub> **FOCUS**

### **FIRE IN THE SKY**

*Taken 24 February 2015*

Stunt pilots tumble in the skies over the Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airfield, Melbourne.

Part of the airshow, the Industry Expo day is an annual demonstration of aviation, aerospace and defence exhibitions, with the latest commercial and military equipment put on show.

Commercial business, industry and government representatives all flock to see the latest hardware on show.







# WAR<sup>in</sup> FOCUS

## BATTLE FOR SHANGHAI

*Taken c. 1937*

Members of the Japanese Special Naval Landing Force take cover while waiting for reinforcements. Beginning with the Marco Polo Bridge incident on 7 July 1937, the Japanese Empire had been chipping away at Chinese territory all year. The battle for the coastal city of Shanghai began on 13 August, with bitter house-to-house fighting breaking out across the various districts. The Japanese also made several amphibious landings to control the city's dockyards. Many troops were equipped with respirators to prepare for the use of gas.











# LIGHT TANKS

Light tanks first saw action in WWI and demonstrated their versatility throughout the 20th Century, before arguably becoming obsolete



## RENAULT FT

**Founded:** 1917

**Country:** France

Often cited as the world's first 'modern' tank, the Renault FT was a stalwart towards the end of the First World War, with over 3,000 of them produced during that time. Five or six could be made for the price of a larger tank, and they were built to swarm larger enemies and defeat them by sheer numbers.

## T-26

**Founded:** 1931

**Country:** Soviet Union

The Soviet T-26 was heavily based on the Vickers Mark-E light tank operated by the British, and became an admirable model for rapid production. It's quite remarkable that over 10,000 of these machines were operational by 1939, cementing the Soviet Union's reputation as a military industrial powerhouse.



## M3 STUART

**Founded:** 1940

**Country:** USA

The M3 is certainly one of the most well-known light tanks ever built, and was produced in large numbers by the US during the war. Many of these Stuarts would be leased to Commonwealth forces, and a large number of them saw action in North Africa against Rommel's fearsome Afrika Korps.





## M551 SHERIDAN

**Founded:** 1966

**Country:** USA

Built to replace the heavy M41 Walker Bulldog, the Sheridan tank was used extensively during the Vietnam War as a reconnaissance and light infantry support vehicle. This was despite its weak hull armour and subsequent vulnerability when faced with RPG fire or AT mines.



## 5 Facts About LIGHT TANKS

### DROPPED ON PANAMA

The American M551 Sheridan was actually capable of being air-dropped from a cargo plane, with this being achieved for the first time during the US invasion of Panama.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The French Renault FT was available in both male and female varieties. The more common female carried a mounted machine gun, while the male sported a short-barrelled 37mm gun.

### THE MAE WEST TANK

During the Thirties, American troops nicknamed some of the early dual-turreted light tanks 'Mae West', as an homage to the decidedly busty movie star of the time.



### A STRANGE EXPERIMENT

In 1942, the Soviet Union tested, somewhat successfully, a flying light tank. The A-40 was attached to a pair of wings that allowed it to be towed in mid air and then released onto the battlefield.

### THE RECORD-BREAKER

The British Scorpion Peacekeeper tank was recognised by Guinness World Records as the fastest tank ever created, achieving an incredible 51mph on a test track in 2002.

## TYPE 95 HA-GO

**Founded:** 1936

**Country:** Japan

Due to the demand for faster and more-reliable armour, the Japanese brought this light tank into production a few years before the outbreak of WWII. Its Hotchkiss-inspired cannon was built for dispensing with infantry, and two Type 97 LMGs completed the arsenal.



## FV-101 SCORPION

**Founded:** 1972

**Country:** United Kingdom

Some Scorpions are believed to still be in use today around the world, with half of those produced being allocated for export. Only weighing eight tons, the Scorpion was an ideal vehicle for infantry support and reconnaissance, seeing action in the First Gulf War as well as the Falkland Islands conflict in 1982.



## TYPE 62

**Founded:** 1962

**Country:** China

The Type 62 was built with manoeuvrability in mind, as well as economy. Due to its low cost it was adopted by certain African nations for use domestically, and the overall design was derived from the Soviet T-54. It first saw action in Vietnam after the Chinese provided several of the units to the NVA prior to the invasion of Kampuchea.





# HEAD TO HEAD

War rages on the Eastern Front as the old Wehrmacht war horse, the Panzer I, goes up against the new kid on the block, the Soviet T-70



**T-70** YEARS IN OPERATION: 1942-1948  
LOYALTY: USSR NUMBER MADE: 8,200

## FIREPOWER

Surprisingly heavy for a light tank, the T-70 had a 45mm gun that used both armour-piercing and explosive rounds. Its secondary weapon was a 7.62mm machine gun.

## SPEED

The T-70 had 140 horsepower at its disposal, which gave it a top speed of 45km/h (28mph). Light tanks had to be quick to compensate for their thin armour.

## TACTICS

With a crew of two, the T-70 struggled to use its main turret effectively and became more of a reconnaissance vehicle. Its chassis would later be used for SU-76M tank killers and the T-80.

## RANGE

A fuel capacity of 120 US Gallons gave the T-70 a range of 360km (224 miles) and helped it zoom across the Eastern Front, where it regularly supported the medium T-34 tank in battle.

## ARMOUR

Protection began at 35mm, but increased to 45mm in later models. The armour was reasonable, but wasn't enough to shield the T-70 from larger tanks and artillery on the battlefield.

## LEGACY

It may have been the most produced Soviet light tank of the war but the T-70 quickly became obsolete and was quickly changed to an anti-tank vehicle to suit its qualities.

## SOVIET TANK PRODUCTION

Churning out T-70s like there was no tomorrow, the Soviet production line was bolstered by the decision to turn civilian factories into military production centres. The T-70 itself was often partnered with the T-34 on the battlefield as they fought the Germans at huge battles such as Kursk. Before the end of the war it was effectively replaced by the T-80, and its chassis was used on tank destroyers like the SU-76M and anti-aircraft guns such as the ZSU-37 as battlefield tactics and technology began to veer away from lighter tanks towards heavier, stronger models.

## TOTAL



*While the Germans were focusing on quality, the Soviets went for sheer numbers. The tactic worked, as the Wehrmacht was overwhelmed*





**PANZER I** *YEARS IN OPERATION: 1935-1945*  
*LOYALTY: NAZI GERMANY NUMBER MADE: 2,800*

**FIREPOWER**

The Panzer I lacked a main gun, instead employing two 7.92mm MG-13 machine guns that could fire 650 rounds per minute and had 2,250 rounds of ammunition.

**SPEED**

Being an older tank, the Panzer could only muster 49km/h (25mph), but in the early days of the war that was more than enough to operate as an effective troop support.

**TACTICS**

The Panzer I was incredibly effective in the opening exchanges of the war as it stormed out of Germany as one of the main components of 'Blitzkrieg'.

**RANGE**

The Panzer could traverse 140 kilometres (87 miles) without filling up, which proved to be more than enough for rapid assaults of 'lightning war'.

**ARMOUR**

The steel plated armour of a Panzer I was some of the most primitive in the German armoured division, only a mere 12.5mm in thickness.

**LEGACY**

Even though light tanks were superseded by heavier models in the Wehrmacht, the Panzer I was the starting point for German tank production and showed their intent on rearmament.

**TOTAL**



*The German tank production line was efficient, but could not match the output of the allied powers*

**GERMAN TANK PRODUCTION**

Throughout World War I, Germany had seemingly very little interest in tanks, but this changed dramatically in the vast rearmament of the Thirties. The first tank to appear on the Wehrmacht production line and breach Versailles was the Panzerkampfwagen I. The first of many, the model was used extensively on both the Western and Eastern Fronts and became a major element of blitzkrieg. As time wore on, the Third Reich changed their focus from light tanks to medium and heavy Panzers such as the Tiger and Panther, but the legacy of the Panzer I lived on.

**The Panzer I was incredibly effective in the opening exchanges of the war as it stormed out of Germany as one of the main components of 'blitzkrieg'**




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# LIGHT TANKS OF THE WORLD

Stretching track marks across the globe and throughout the 20th Century

## 1 SIEGE OF TOBRUK

TOBRUK, LIBYA 10 APRIL 1941

Large numbers of light tanks from the British Commonwealth go into fierce battles with Rommel's armoured Afrika Korps to protect the Allied toehold in Egypt.



Britain's General Bernard L. Montgomery in North Africa.



Vickers 6-ton

### Vickers 6-ton

Operating: 1929

Speciality: Long-range cross-country manoeuvres

Location: United Kingdom

### Landsverk L-120

Operating: 1937

Speciality: Defence and infantry support

Location: Sweden

### T15

Operating: 1936

Speciality: High-speed off-road manoeuvres

Location: Belgium

### Hotchkiss H35

Operating: 1935

Speciality: Engaging other light tanks

Location: France

### Verdeja 1

Operating: 1940

Speciality: Infantry support and assault

Location: Spain

### SK-105 Kürassier

Operating: 1967

Speciality: Anti-tank operations

Location: Austria

## US LIGHT TANKS

### M2 Light Tank

Operating: 1935

Speciality: Anti-infantry operations

### M41 Walker Bulldog

Operating: 1953

Speciality: Scouting and infantry support

### M22 Locust

Operating: 1942

Speciality: Airborne support and recon



M22 Locust

### TAM

Operating: 1976

Speciality: Infantry combat and wading

Location: Argentina

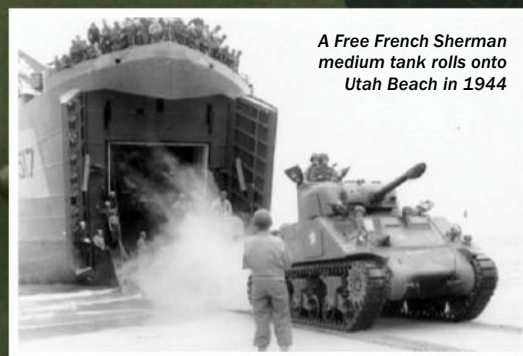


Argentine TAM

## 2 D-DAY

NORMANDY, FRANCE 6 JUNE 1944

The Normandy landings of Operation Overlord required the Allies to deposit a large amount of armour onto French shores. Among these were British and American light tanks, along with the near ubiquitous Sherman.



A Free French Sherman medium tank rolls onto Utah Beach in 1944



### 3 FIRST BATTLE OF NAKTONG BULGE

**SOUTH KOREA 6 AUGUST 1950**

North Korea crosses the Naktong River and into US-held South Korean territory. The Americans are on stand-by with M24 Chaffee light tanks, which saw service until after Vietnam.

#### RUSSIAN LIGHT TANKS

##### PT-76

**Operating:** 1951  
**Speciality:** Recon and troop support

##### T-18

**Operating:** 1928  
**Speciality:** Strength and firepower



Russian T-18



The Soviet offensive at Kursk put the Germans on the back foot

### 5 BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

**STALINGRAD, RUSSIA 2 FEBRUARY 1943**

The German army surrenders at Stalingrad following a fierce counter-attack from the Soviet Union and its bevy of light tanks. Many cite this defeat as the turning point of the war on the Russian Front.

### 6 BATTLE OF KURSK

**KURSK, RUSSIA 5 JULY 1943**

Georgiy Zhukov, springs his armoured trap on the Axis. American M3 tanks are utilised by the Soviet Union during some of the fiercest tank fighting ever known, although they prove unpopular.



French AMX-13

#### M1985

**Operating:** 1985  
**Speciality:** Amphibious reconnaissance and assault  
**Location:** North Korea

3

7

### 7 THE BURMA FRONT

**BURMA 20 FEBRUARY 1942**

The 7th Armoured Division, famously christened the Desert Rats, reaches Rangoon in Burma with light tanks and cruisers in order to set up defences in an attempt to halt the Japanese invasion of mainland Asia.

### 8 SIX DAY WAR

**SINAI PENINSULA, EGYPT**

**5 JUNE 1967**  
Israel and a conglomerate of Arab territories go toe to toe in the Six Day War, each utilising a host of different light tank designs including AMX-13s and Soviet PT-76s.

#### Type 63A

**Operating:** 1997  
**Speciality:** Long-range amphibious assaults  
**Location:** China



Type 63A

### 4 SECOND BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN

**EL ALAMEIN, EGYPT 23 OCTOBER 1942**

German Panzer II tanks face off against a cohort of Crusader Mk I tanks of Great Britain as Monty goes head-to-head with Rommel.

British Crusader tanks move into position in North Africa





# ZHUKOV'S ARMoured OFFENSIVE

20 - 31 AUGUST 1939

Armed with over 450 superior light tanks, the Soviet armoured divisions settled a border dispute with the Japanese in Manchuria

The Second Sino-Japanese War was well underway by the time this small clash on the borders of Mongolia had developed into a full-scale conflict. Instigated after Mongolian cavalry entered Manchuria in May 1938, the conflict evolved into the battle of Khalkin Gol between Imperial Japan and the USSR. The Soviets were able to call on small light cavalry 'Bystrokhodny' tanks such as the BT-5 and BT-7 ('Betkas'), which outpowered their Japanese equivalents. The fighting raged on throughout the summer of 1938 until the decisive blow on the 20 August, when Soviet General Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov delivered a tactical masterclass.

**"BT-5 TANKS ARMED WITH FLAMETHROWERS SMASHED THE JAPANESE FORWARD COMMAND POSTS AS THE RED ARMY SENSED BLOOD"**

## 1 INITIAL SOVIET ADVANCE

Backed by air support, Zhukov's armoured divisions advance on to the eastern bank of the river Khalkin Gol ready to engage the Japanese with their superior BT-5 and BT-7 light tanks.

## 2 CROSSING THE RIVER

At its tributary, a 57,000-strong Soviet force, (including 498 BT-5 tanks) crosses the Khalkin Gol. This force included the 4th, 6th and 11th Tank Brigades and the 7th and 8th Mechanised Brigades.

## 3 START OF THE ASSAULT

The sheer number of Soviets shock the Japanese who have been let down by poor communications in their intelligence. They have a similar-sized force, but much inferior armour and technology as the artillery barrage begins.

## 4 A RELENTLESS OFFENSIVE

The joint Mongolian-Soviet attacks are unrelenting as the motorised divisions advance onwards, constantly reinforced by air support. The troops only move at night so the bombing raids mask the sound of caterpillar tracks. Defensive structures are constructed to fool the Japanese.



Soviet Ilyushin Il-10 ground-attack fighter

## 5 OUTFLANKING PINCER MOVEMENT

Unable to respond quickly, the Japanese units fall right into the hands of Zhukov, who pins down the centre of the Japanese line while using the BT-5 and BT-7 tanks on the flanks.

## 6 COMPLETELY SURROUNDED

The Soviet attack is a classic double envelopment. The Red Army first cuts around the right flank to the south and then the left to the north. They join up at the village of Nomonhan and the Japanese are surrounded.

## 7 SEEK AND DESTROY

BT-5 tanks armed with flamethrowers smash the Japanese forward command posts as the Red Army begins to sense its enemy is on the backfoot. The Japanese counter with Molotov cocktails, but the Soviets have covered their engines with wire mesh to limit the projectile's impact.

## 8 ATTEMPTS TO BREAK THE CIRCLE

Aware of their perilous situation, the Japanese infantry attempt to break out. The operation fails, as the Soviet motorised divisions are too strong and numerous.

## 9 DEFEAT BUT NO SURRENDER

Japanese martial tradition dictates that no soldier can surrender. This was the case at Khalkin Gol, where the remaining infantry were wiped out by airstrikes. Up to 40,000 Japanese troops died.

## 15 SEPTEMBER CEASEFIRE SIGNED

Humiliated at the loss, the Japanese turn their attention to naval supremacy, and in less than two years Pearl Harbor is attacked. The victory was essential for the USSR, who need experienced men come the German advance on the Eastern Front.

## A HISTORY OF THE 'BETKA'

### SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The USSR provided arms and aid to the left wing Republicans and Popular Front in Spain. By 1938, 50 BT-5 tanks were in Zaragoza to support the war effort.



### THE WINTER WAR

Light BT tanks played a role in the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939, and some were even captured by the Finnish and turned against their former masters.

### BATTLE OF LAKE KHASAN

A precursor to Khalkin Gol, this battle would again see the BT-5 and BT-7 tanks outclass the Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go light tank.



### BARBAROSSA

The light Betka tanks were obsolete by the time of the German invasion, as their armour and armament paled in comparison to the superior panzers.



### TECHNICAL INFLUENCE

The Russian light tank series lived on as the BT tanks formed the basis for the mass-produced T-34 tank, which was used extensively on the Eastern Front and beyond.









ANATOMY OF A...

# PANZER II

Developed clandestinely before the invasion of Poland, the Panzer II was phased out from 1942 though its chassis was used on a number of self-propelled guns until 1944

**7.92MM COAXIAL MASCHINENGEWEHR**

Also known by the designation MG 34, the 7.92 machine gun fitted to the Panzer II was an effective anti-infantry weapon and also saw service as a support weapon among Wehrmacht platoons.

**HATCH FOR ENTRY OR ESCAPE**

**20MM MAIN GUN**

Produced in Germany in the mid-to-late Thirties, the 2cm KwK 30 L/55 was based on a 20mm flak cannon and was fully automatic, requiring the operator to fire in controlled bursts.

**THE TRACKS**

**THE FRONTAL GLACIS**

These only sported the standard amount of armour, which was strange for a tank, but later received a new single piece 30mm glacis upon reaching its final Ausf F designation.

**PANZERKAMPFWAGEN II**

**YEARS IN USE:** 9  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** GERMANY  
**ENGINE SIZE:** 6-CYLINDER, 138HP  
**CREW:** 3  
**LENGTH:** 4.81M  
**WEIGHT:** 8.9 TONS  
**TOP SPEED:** 25MPH  
**WEAPONS:** 1 X 20MM KWK 30 MAIN GUN,  
 1 X 7.92MM COAXIAL MACHINE GUN

**MANUAL TRANSMISSION SYSTEM**

The Panzer II sported a six-speed plus reverse manual gearbox made by ZF Friedrichshafen, which was generally considered to be reliable. Reversing was particularly handy for these little tanks.



**HAND-CRANKED TURRET**

The turret on the Panzer II was actually operated by the tank's commander rather than a specific gunner, as the limited space inside the machine only allowed for three crew members.

**VISION PORTS**

These were plentiful on the Panzer II, and absolutely essential in both offensive and defensive capacities. A Panzer II commander would operate the turret and so would need a secondary choice of viewport from his turret optics.

**HOMOGENOUS STEEL ARMOUR**

Early Panzer IIs came with only 14mm of armour on the front, sides and back. This was later increased to 30mm, and then to 35mm, but was still largely useless against anti-tank weaponry.

**RADIO AERIAL****SIX-CYLINDER MAYBACH PETROL ENGINE**

The Maybach HL 45 was a six-cylinder petrol engine that saw service in several German vehicles during the Second World War. It was designed to provide the Panzer II with speed without sacrificing mobility.

**DESIGNED UNDER FALSE PRETENCE**

With the end of the First World War came the Treaty of Versailles. Among many things limiting Germany were restrictions to her military rights, preventing her from producing armoured vehicles except for a few designated for security. To get around this, the German military ordered the Panzer II be produced under the designation Landwirtschaftlicher Schlepper 100, meaning that it was developed under the guise of being a farm tractor. This was common practice for Germany, and ensured that she wasn't in short supply of armour when war rolled around.

**TRACK RETURN ROLLERS**

The upper part of the continuous track was supported by three return rollers, which were later increased to four on subsequent models of Panzer II for added stability.

**RUBBER TIRED ROAD WHEELS**

Five of these wheels helped propel the tracks, in turn propelling the vehicle forwards. Later models introduced a torsion bar suspension system for the wheels, whereas early models favoured leaf-type springs.





# LIGHT TANK HEROES

The tactical prowess behind the formidable machines

## THE DESERT RATS

Years active: **1938-1958**

Country: **Great Britain**

The British 7th Armoured Division, colloquially known as the Desert Rats, was initially formed in Egypt to increase British strength in Africa and the Middle East following the Munich Agreement in 1938. Set up as a mobile force, it was quickly developed into a division made up of a cavalry brigade supported by artillery cannons and howitzers, and was soon joined by the Royal Rifle Corps, which became a motorised battalion.

Following the outbreak of World War II, the Desert Rats regularly found themselves in combat with the Italian Army, which largely outnumbered the British contingent. However, due to the Italians' lack of armour and its reliance on outdated ordnance – including artillery that dated back to World War I – the Desert Rats were soon the dominant force.

However, it wasn't long before a more threatening enemy was close by. General Erwin Rommel, one of the finest tacticians of the

war, soon landed in Africa under orders from Hitler and brought with him his Afrika Korps. This led to a series of vicious and pivotal conflicts including battles at Tobruk and El Alamein, eventually resulting in the Axis retreat to Italy. The Desert Rats fought in Italy, before being recalled to Britain to aid in the Normandy landings of June 1944, now armed with heavier Cromwell tanks.

The courage and tactical mastery of the British 7th Armoured Division proved to be indispensable at a time when the German and Italian armies were in a strong position to increase their influence in Africa and the Middle East, and their gifted command of light tanks gave them the edge on tough, unforgiving terrain. The division's legacy lives on in name and tradition through the 7th Armoured Brigade, which still proudly sports the old rat insignia today. It's a small nod to the past that was very much earned by the boys of the 7th – after all, these are the brave men that chased the Germans all the way from Egypt to Berlin.

## HEINZ GUDERIAN

Years active: **1907-1945**

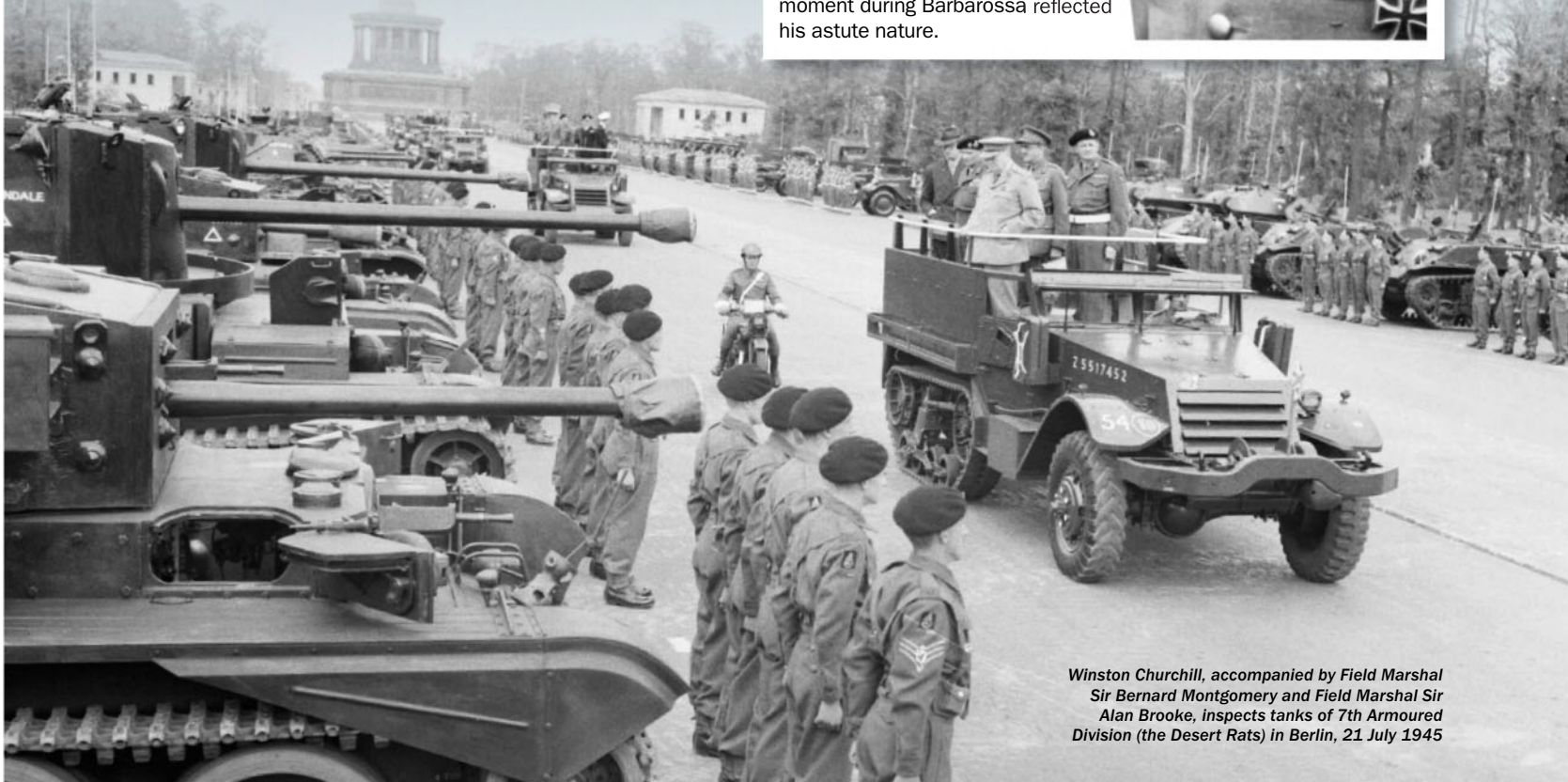
Country: **Germany**

Heinz Guderian's military legacy encompasses many things. One is his reputed temper and defiant nature, currying poor favour among senior German military officials. Another is the important part he played in developing German tank tactics – including Blitzkrieg manoeuvres – during both war and peace time.

The most important, though, is his easily identifiable loyalty to the military, characterised by his service to three different ideologies during his forces career, from empire to republic to dictatorship.

Guderian was one of only 4,000 officers asked to remain in the military following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, and carried out his military service right through World War II, developing key tank tactics along the way and utilising light tanks to complement his emphasis on manoeuvrability.

A veritable military genius, Guderian's armoured tactics were the foundation upon which Panzer operations were built, and his defiance of Hitler at a crucial moment during Barbarossa reflected his astute nature.



Winston Churchill, accompanied by Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery and Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, inspects tanks of 7th Armoured Division (the Desert Rats) in Berlin, 21 July 1945



## STANISŁAW MACZEK

Years active: **1914-1947**

Country: **Poland**

Defeat is a bitter pill to swallow. Some men succumb to it easily, others learn from it and adapt. Despite his efforts, Stanisław Maczek had to watch his besieged country fall into German hands in 1939, throwing the entire world into an inescapable state of violence, fear and uncertainty.

During Hitler's push into Poland, Maczek was ordered to move his 10th Motorised Cavalry Brigade into positions to defend the southern flank of the encircled Polish forces, only equipped with light tanks and smaller vehicles. He faced off against several Panzer squadrons, slowing the German attack considerably. Unfortunately, the Panzer divisions broke through, and it wasn't long before Poland fell into Axis hands.

Despite this, Maczek fought valiantly for the rest of the war, embodying the courageous and indomitable spirit of the Polish through the countless victories that he and his men achieved during the course of the war. Maczek passed away in 1994, aged 102.



## KURT KNISPEL

Years active: **1940-1945**

Country: **Czechoslovakia (Sudeten German)**

Even though Kurt Knispel didn't enter military service until 1940, and made his name in heavy Tiger and King Tiger tanks, his preceding years were spent completing tank training in the comparatively lithe Panzer I and Panzer II. This basis in armoured tactics proved indispensable throughout his career – one that ultimately resulted in Knispel becoming the highest-scoring tank ace of World War II.

At the time when Hitler made the fateful decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941, Knispel manned the turret of a far heavier Panzer IV during the initial German assault into the seemingly unconquerable territory. Following this, he took command of Tiger tanks and their bigger brother, the fearsome Tiger II. During these years, Kurt Knispel earned 168 confirmed kills of enemy vehicles (although the number may be as high as 195!), cementing his position as a fearsome gunner, and a worthy commander to boot.



## SYDNEY VALPY RADLEY-WALTERS

Years active: **1940-1974**

Country: **Canada**

Nicknamed 'Rad', Sydney Radley-Walters developed a reputation as an effective military leader during World War II and a man that was popular among his men.

An officer with the 27th Armoured Regiment (The Sherbrooke Fusilier Regiment), Rad's strong interpersonal skills came to the fore in the aftermath of the D-Day landings of 1944, where their iconic Shermans, supported by M3 Stuart light tanks, found themselves face-to-face with the Waffen SS, caught in the hard slog that was Bernard Montgomery's misjudged Battle for Caen.

During the second half of 1944, Rad and the brave men of the Canadian Army faced off against Panzer divisions regularly, and there are many who claim that a Sherman Firefly under his command killed the famous Michael Wittmann. It was also the Sherbrooke Fusiliers that came to the rescue of the US 101st Airborne during the unsuccessful Operation Market Garden.

*27th Sherman 'Bomb' was the only Canadian tank to fight from D-Day to VE-Day uninterrupted*



## MICHAEL WITTMANN

Years active: **1934-1944**

Country: **Germany**

Often described as the most effective tank commander ever, Michael Wittmann began his military service as part of Germany's assault gun initiative in Berlin. Many of these mobile guns, such as the STuG, were based on the chassis of light and medium tanks like the Panzer II and III. At the outset of Operation Barbarossa, Wittmann's unit was ordered to advance into southern Russia, during which he was responsible for the destruction of a large number of Soviet tanks, earning himself the Iron Cross (Second Class) in the process.

In his ten-year military career, Wittmann was credited with well over 100 kills – an incredible total and one that justifies his

reputation. After the end of war in Europe, several groups and individuals attempted to take credit for the killing of Wittmann, after his Tiger tanks were destroyed by Allied forces in France.



## 254TH INDIAN TANK BRIGADE

Years active: **1941-1945**

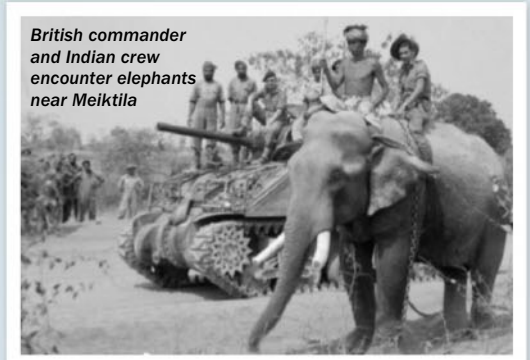
Country: **India**

It was early 1942 when the Imperial Japanese Army invaded southern Burma and wasn't long before it had conquered the nation. Drafted in to intercept the invaders were the British, the Chinese, the US, Canada and a wealth of armies from the African continent. The British Indian Army played a crucial role in holding off the Japanese, and this particular brigade utilised M3 Stuart light tanks to outmanoeuvre and outgun the Imperial forces.

It was in 1944, when the Western Front

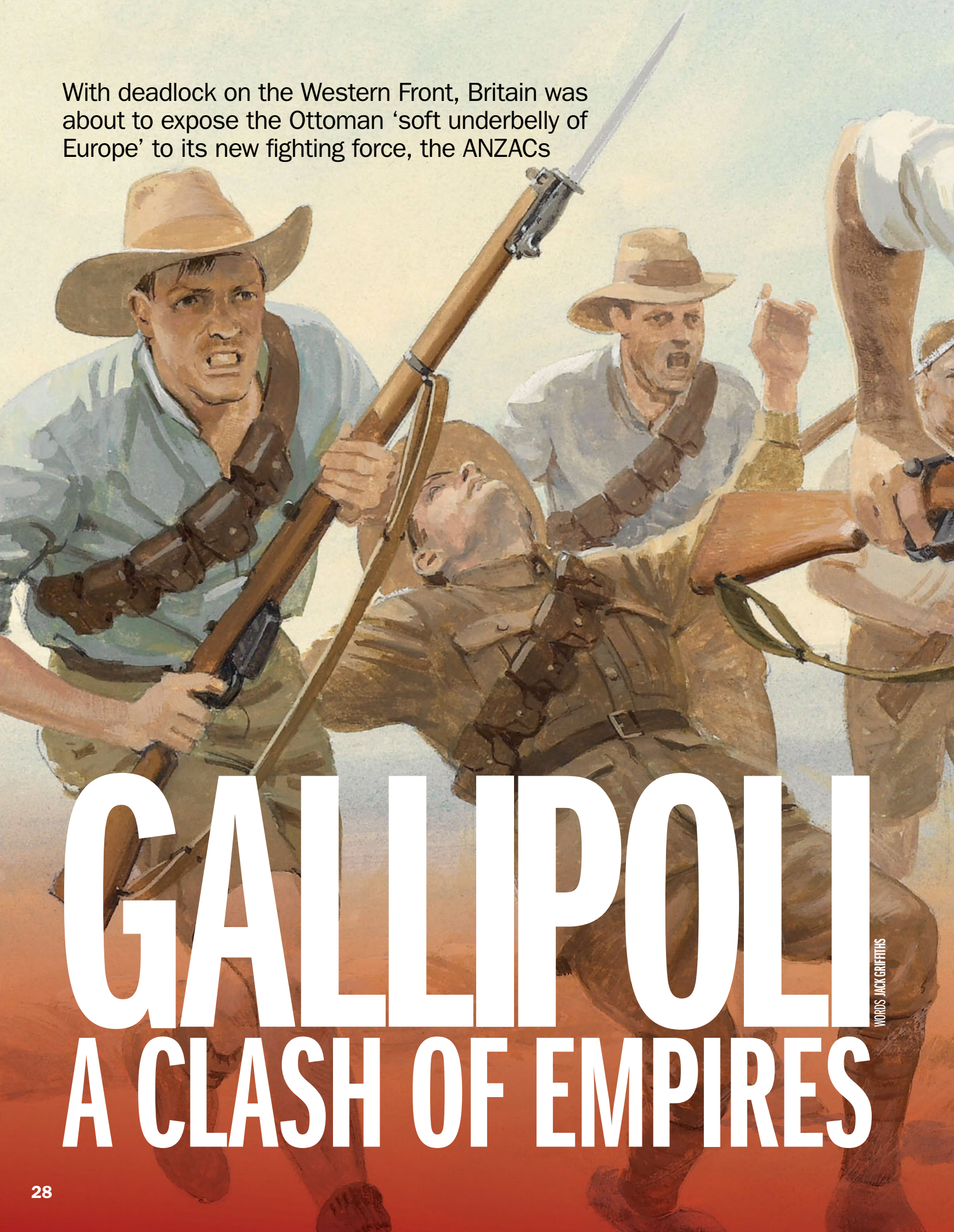
was preparing for Normandy, that the battle for Burma reached its climax. Japan's desire to take India thrust it into war, and two battles that took place simultaneously – and right next door to each other – resulted in the retreat of the Japanese forces. The 254th fought hard for months, cementing its reputation as an admirable armoured corps.

*British commander and Indian crew encounter elephants near Meiktila*





With deadlock on the Western Front, Britain was about to expose the Ottoman 'soft underbelly of Europe' to its new fighting force, the ANZACs



# GALLIPOLI

## A CLASH OF EMPIRES

WORDS JACK GRIFFITHS





Looking out onto the shoreline, Lieutenant-General William Birdwood knew that this would be a risk. Gallipoli, which was once Britain's foolproof plan in the fight against the might of the Central Powers, was fast becoming a disaster and the commander of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) had been entrusted with turning the tide of the failing campaign.

The landings began on 25 April 1915 and were designed to take the heat off the British divisions up and down the coast. As the fleet of transports neared the beaches, many were picked

off by the Ottoman machine gunners before they even made it to land. For those that did make it out of the boats, they were faced with steep cliffs and a relentless, ferocious enemy led by Colonel Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk and 'father' of modern Turkey. Within a short space of time it was clear that this was going to be no easy battle.

For a campaign that was meant to end the stalemate on the Western Front, progression was remarkably slow and trenches were soon constructed. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) would lose hundreds of soldiers in the first few days as they dug in to protect a small beachhead and await orders.



## A ready and willing force

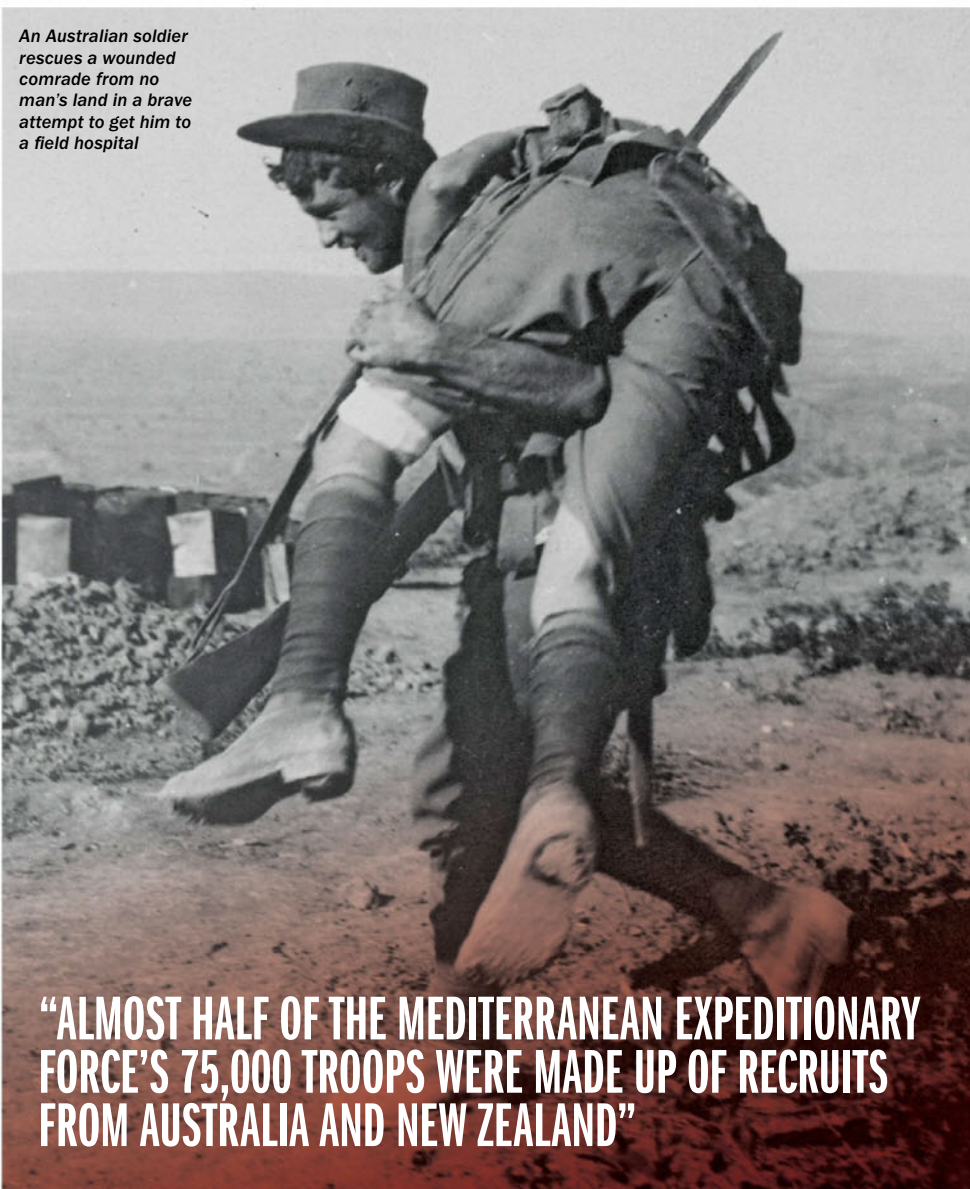
Rewind to late 1914 and the picture is a very different one for the ANZAC soldiers. Rather than facing the mud of northern France like the majority of the British Army, including many Australians and New Zealanders, the corps was training on the sands of the Sahara desert. With training and accommodation facilities in short supply back in England, this was deemed the best place to get the ANZAC troops prepared for the heat of battle.

Eagerly awaiting deployment, the war effort was actually very popular in Australasia. Australian Prime Minister Joseph Cook pledged his support to Britain and many rushed to be recruited for the army, as they didn't want to miss out on the adventure. Many 'boy soldiers' even lied about their ages to become part of this high-paid job that will, of course, be over by Christmas. Australia instantly promised 20,000 men to the cause and raised the AIF. New Zealand weren't far behind and the 8,454-strong New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) left the capital Wellington in October 1914, eager to join the fighting. After their arrival, the NZEF troops were first pressed into action in the Suez Canal, where they helped quash an Ottoman raid on the important waterway. Fast forward to April 1915 and the wheels were now in motion for the ANZAC deployment from Egypt to Turkey. Gallipoli and glory beckoned. Or so they thought.

Almost half of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force's (MEF) 75,000 troops were made up of recruits from Australia and New Zealand. Saddled with a 40 kilogram pack of equipment and supplies, the ANZAC troops entered the lion's den of ANZAC Cove on that fateful day in April 1915 and established a beachhead against the opposing Ottomans.

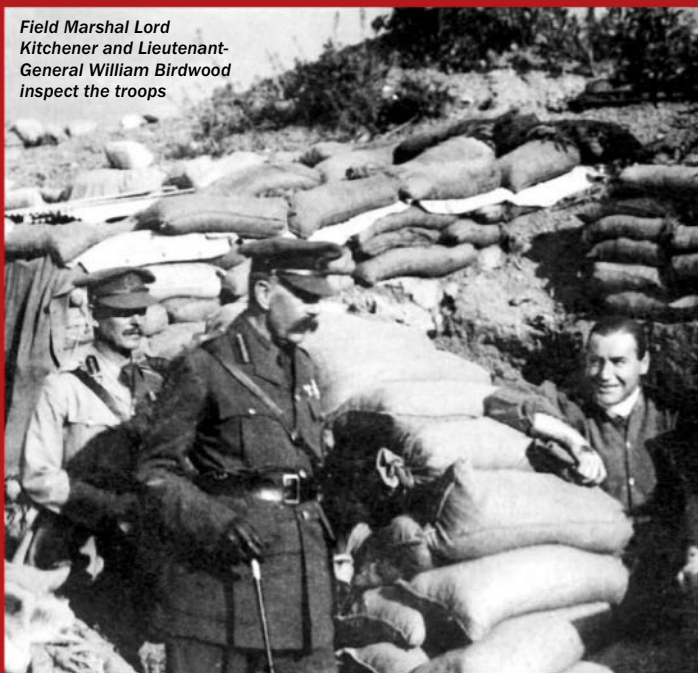
The peaceful way of life back home seemed far away and a hot summer was on the horizon. As the troops were tormented by the Turkish heat and swarms of insects, they now realised this was what war was really like.

*An Australian soldier rescues a wounded comrade from no man's land in a brave attempt to get him to a field hospital*



**“ALMOST HALF OF THE MEDITERRANEAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE'S 75,000 TROOPS WERE MADE UP OF RECRUITS FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND”**

*Field Marshal Lord Kitchener and Lieutenant-General William Birdwood inspect the troops*



## WHY ATTACK GALLIPOLI?

**THE RISKY OPERATION FULL OF PROMISE THAT BACKFIRED SPECTACULARLY FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE**

Gallipoli was a failure for the British and is remembered for the frequent blunders made by the Allied hierarchy and the spirited defence of the peninsula by the Ottomans.

The campaign was the brainchild of Winston Churchill - then First Lord of the Admiralty - who desired a second front against the Central Powers. A surge through the 'soft underbelly of Europe' would weaken the German and Austrian lines on the Western and Eastern Fronts. It was believed that this would be a quick-fix for the deadlock in Europe.

The campaign began on 19 February 1915 with the mighty Royal Navy sailing into the Dardanelles, a strait on the west coast of Turkey,

with the aim of bombarding and capturing Constantinople. The poor weather and tougher-than-expected Turkish fortifications damaged the Royal Navy considerably and three battleships were sunk. Army assistance, including the ANZAC troops, was called in by April but could only establish small footholds as the Ottomans defended doggedly.

This stalemate would drag on for a number of months as offensives continually proved ineffectual. In December 1915, British command decided that enough was enough and pulled the troops out. It was back to the Western Front for more bloodshed.



# ANZAC RECRUIT

## CITIZEN SOLDIERS OF THE EMPIRE

The British Army incorporated a large contingent of troops from all over the empire to swell its ranks. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) were stationed in Egypt ready for action in Gallipoli.

### BAYONET

A bayonet was attached to the end of the rifle for close-quarters combat. The Ottomans carried swords and lances, so this blade could be invaluable when low on ammunition.

### EQUIPMENT

A standard ANZAC soldier would carry on their Sam Browne belt: a revolver holster, ammo pouch, sword frog, compass, binoculars, map case, shovel, haversack and water bottle.

### RIFLE

The rifle of choice for an ANZAC soldier was the trusty bolt-action Lee Enfield MK I rifle. These were wielded by the main infantry, while officers carried revolvers.

### MOUNTED RIFLES HAT

Known as the 'slouch hat', the New Zealand version here was slightly different to its Australian counterpart and nicknamed 'the lemon squeezer'. A different coloured cloth band denoted rank and service branch.

### UNIFORM

Khaki was the order of the day and helped the ANZAC troops stay concealed in the heat of the Turkish sun. The New Zealand uniform was actually slightly greener than British versions.

### RATIONS

On average, 30kg of rations would be carried. The most common foods were bully beef, hard biscuits, tea, sugar and beef cubes. They would also carry firewood and spare clothing.

### The troops dig in

Life on ANZAC Cove was harsh and painfully repetitive. The daily routine on the tiny six-kilometre bay would consist of observing and sniping enemy positions with the occasional bombing run. Life behind the frontline saw support trenches ferry supplies to the front. Despite their perilous situation, it is well known that to unwind the Australians swam in the warm waters of the Aegean Sea. Life was especially difficult for the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC), who were often undermanned and undersupplied. Fresh water was particularly scarce and the craving for it was heightened by the diet of salty bully beef and dry biscuits.

One of the most famous men of the AAMC was John Simpson, who led a stretcher-carrying donkey around the battlefield to pick up the injured and transport them to safety behind the lines. Despite the medical staff's best efforts, typhoid and dysentery were common and these illnesses, along with poor nutrition, gradually wore down the ANZAC troops. Many reports suggest that treatment for the wounded was even worse than on the Western Front.

Between April and August 1915, neither the Ottomans nor the ANZAC forces were able to break the deadlock. Trench warfare unfolded and, unlike the British hierarchy had hoped, the ANZAC divisions were unable to break through.



### MAXIM MACHINE GUN

The Maxim boasted an excellent fire rate but was soon replaced by the more reliable Vickers and Hotchkiss guns. Machine guns were a new type of warfare that would try to end the stalemate of the trenches.

### GARLAND TRENCH MORTAR

The most-used mortar of the Gallipoli campaign, the Garland proved useful at clearing enemy trenches. Projectiles were aimed using a telescope and sent in at a 45-degree angle using a powder charge.



### Ingenuity may save the day

In early May, the New Zealand Infantry Brigade was tasked with a new objective that would hopefully outmanoeuvre the resolute Ottomans. The brigade was taken south to Helles, where British divisions were engaged in combat. Their mission was an assault on the village of Krithia that would join the British forces up with the ANZAC contingent. Progress was initially encouraging but the advance soon turned into a series of battles; 800 men were lost.

The ANZAC contribution to the war effort wasn't limited to the frontline. Lurking in the straits was an Australian submarine by the name of AE2, which constantly harassed the Ottoman Navy deep inside its territory. Sinking destroyers, battleships and gunboats, the AE2 eventually ran out of luck on 30 April when it was sunk by an Ottoman torpedo boat after trying to rendezvous with a British submarine. Captain Henry Stoker was left with no option but to scuttle the vessel and the 35-man crew were captured as prisoners of war.

Back on the rocky heights of ANZAC Cove, the remainder of the Australasian corps was struggling against the Turkish defenses. Traversing the cliffs while dodging machine gun

fire was a fruitless exercise, especially as the defenders were being constantly reinforced.

The periscope rifle was one invention that made life easier for the ANZAC troops. Devised by Sergeant William Beach of the 2nd Battalion of the AIF, mirrors were attached to the sight of a rifle allowing soldiers to have a view above the trench without sticking their head in the Ottoman crosshairs. String was also attached so the trigger could be pulled without their hands getting in the line of fire.

There was also the jam tin bomb. Crudely made, this was another excellent improvisation from the ANZACs and was simply an old tin filled with whatever explosives they could get their hands on. All in all it was a plucky invention that saw extended use on the frontline.

On 15 May, the ANZACs lost their chief of general staff when Major General WT Bridges was shot by an Ottoman sniper. This was followed by a huge Ottoman push of 42,000 men on 18 May that was repulsed by the ANZAC forces. Reinforcements in the shape of the Australian 2nd and 3rd Light Horse Brigade arrived but there was still no release from the cove. Despite the ANZAC's best efforts, there was seemingly no way of ending the stalemate.

## "FRESH WATER WAS PARTICULARLY SCARCE AND THE CRAVING FOR IT WAS HEIGHTENED BY THE DIET OF SALTY BULLY BEEF AND DRY BISCUITS"



## THE BATTLE OF LONE PINE 6-9 AUGUST 1915

IF THERE WAS ANY CHANCE OF THE AUGUST OFFENSIVE WORKING, THIS FEINT, 100 METRES ABOVE ANZAC COVE, WOULD HAVE TO SUCCEED

By August 1915, the ANZAC regiments were already an integral part of the British force. Their mission on this day was to draw the Ottoman armies away from Chunuk Bair to give the August Offensive a chance of succeeding. The ANZAC artillery barrage ceased at 5.30pm. Battle was about to begin.

### 02 TRENCH DEFENCE

In a flash the ANZAC troops reached the shocked Ottoman encampment. The ANZAC soldiers were then surprised themselves as the trenches were roofed with pine logs. Unable to force their way in and unsure of what to do, many soldiers became sitting ducks and were shot down.

### 01 BREAKOUT

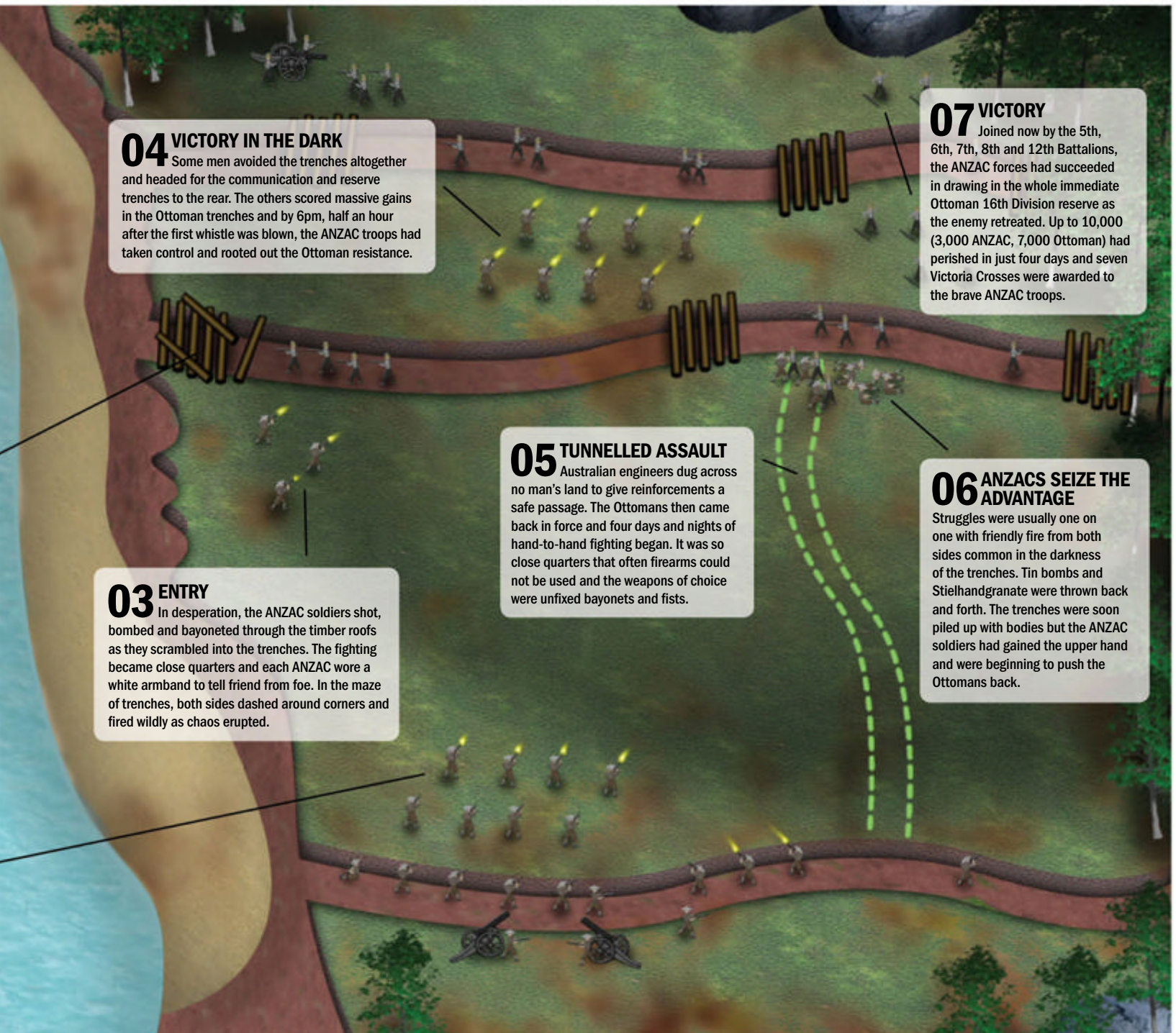
On the shores of the Aegean Sea, Allied regional Commander in Chief Sir Ian Hamilton established a line and called an end to the artillery barrage. At 5.30pm, 4,600 Australians from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions charged the Ottoman positions on Hill 971 with the sun on their backs.



Above: Australian infantry after the battle. Ottoman bodies can be seen strewn across the top of the trench

Left: Troops would carry up to 40kg of supplies with them when they travelled, including food and spare clothing





**04 VICTORY IN THE DARK**

Some men avoided the trenches altogether and headed for the communication and reserve trenches to the rear. The others scored massive gains in the Ottoman trenches and by 6pm, half an hour after the first whistle was blown, the ANZAC troops had taken control and rooted out the Ottoman resistance.

**07 VICTORY**

Joined now by the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 12th Battalions, the ANZAC forces had succeeded in drawing in the whole immediate Ottoman 16th Division reserve as the enemy retreated. Up to 10,000 (3,000 ANZAC, 7,000 Ottoman) had perished in just four days and seven Victoria Crosses were awarded to the brave ANZAC troops.

**05 TUNNELLED ASSAULT**

Australian engineers dug across no man's land to give reinforcements a safe passage. The Ottomans then came back in force and four days and nights of hand-to-hand fighting began. It was so close quarters that often firearms could not be used and the weapons of choice were unfixed bayonets and fists.

**06 ANZACS SEIZE THE ADVANTAGE**

Struggles were usually one on one with friendly fire from both sides common in the darkness of the trenches. Tin bombs and Stielhandgranate were thrown back and forth. The trenches were soon piled up with bodies but the ANZAC soldiers had gained the upper hand and were beginning to push the Ottomans back.

**03 ENTRY**

In desperation, the ANZAC soldiers shot, bombed and bayoneted through the timber roofs as they scrambled into the trenches. The fighting became close quarters and each ANZAC wore a white armband to tell friend from foe. In the maze of trenches, both sides dashed around corners and fired wildly as chaos erupted.

**THE ENEMY IN DETAIL**  
THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINES

By the outbreak of the war, the Ottomans were in no fit state for another conflict. After losing land and money in the First and Second Balkan War, they were described as the 'sick man of Europe'. The Ottomans had originally desired an alliance with Britain but this was rebuffed. Impressed with Germany's growing power, they eventually sided with the Central Powers.

The Empire had a long-standing rivalry with Russia and were determined to access Russian

seaports. Their assault on Russia's Black Sea ports inadvertently caused the Gallipoli campaign as the Russians appealed for support from their allies.

The straits of Dardanelles were littered with mines that wreaked havoc with the Royal Navy's ships. What the British didn't know, however, was that the naval bombardment had nearly eradicated all of the Ottoman troops in the area. The withdrawal allowed commander Mustafa Kemal to bring in five corps worth of reinforcements from the Fifth Army to bolster Ottoman strength.

The army put out by the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli was heavily reliant on assistance from Germany and Austria. They had borrowed the idea of khaki uniforms from them and now wore a kabalak rather than the traditional Turkish fez.

The Empire had very little munitions of their own so both the infantry and cavalry wielded either the Mauser 1893 or Ghewehr 88 rifle, again provided by the Germans. The Ottomans on the peninsula also had swords, pistols and lances as well as Stielhandgranate, a grenade commonly associated with Germany.



*Gallipoli was the most successful Ottoman action of the war as the British underestimated the defences of the strait*



**“AS WE CAPTURED LONE PINE WE FELT LIKE WILD BEASTS AND AS FAST AS OUR MEN WENT DOWN ANOTHER WOULD TAKE HIS PLACE BUT SOON THE WOUNDED WERE PILED UP THREE OR FOUR DEEP AND THE MOANS OF OUR POOR FELLOWS AND ALSO THE TURKS WE TRAMPED ON WAS AWFUL.”**

Private Tom Billings







*A group of Australian troops bravely charging head on at an Ottoman trench*



## Failure after failure

A hastily arranged armistice took place on 24 May so both sides could collect the fallen that now littered the battlefield. The ceasefire lasted from 7.30am to 4.30pm before the fighting resumed for another few months. Something had to give and by August, the British commanders had a new idea – the August Offensive.

One of the first of these new engagements was the Battle of the Nek on 7 August 1915. The Australian 3rd Horse Brigade was entrusted with an advance on a thin strip of land known as the Nek. Here, there were a number of Turkish trenches that, if taken, would represent a significant foothold for the British. The attack began at 4.30am with support from an offshore destroyer that provided an artillery barrage.

Unfortunately, in one of the miscalculations that seemed to happen at Gallipoli so frequently, the bombardment was unleashed seven minutes early and the Ottomans had time to shelter and then return to their positions ready for the cavalry charge.

In a scene reminiscent of the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Ottoman machine gun fire cut down the cavalry and infantry. More than 300 died in the massacre with next to no territorial gain. While the Australians were led to the slaughter at Nek, the New Zealanders were facing problems of their own at Chunuk Bair, a 13-day struggle to the summit of the Sari Bair ridge.

After fierce resistance on the ascent, the New Zealanders arrived to find the peak deserted and the Wellington and Auckland Battalions were forced to hold off a renewed Ottoman advance on the top at dawn on 8 August. Under increasing pressure from artillery strikes and machine gun fire, the stubborn New Zealanders were eventually bailed out by incoming British troops, who themselves were soon taken out by a mass Ottoman counterattack.

Later in the month, the Battle of Hill 60 on 21 August proved to be just as disastrous for both Australian and New Zealand soldiers. After the failures at Nek and Chunuk Bair, this battle represented the last throw of the dice for the weary divisions. The ANZAC troops managed to get among the maze of Ottoman trenches but were unable to force them out of their positions completely. With a distinct lack of ammunition and minimal artillery support, the attack soon lost momentum. The exhausted British lost up to 2,500 men as the Ottomans once again proved too strong.

The main British divisions were struggling themselves. Suvla Bay was a small, lightly defended enclave that was seen by the British as an ideal way to break the deadlock and finally hit the Ottomans where it hurt. Some 63,000 allied troops swarmed into the area and had massive gains but could not link up with ANZAC Cove before they were repulsed.

This was the final straw for Field Lord Marshal Kitchener who, after a visit, declared that evacuation was the only course of action for this costly campaign. Long-standing Commander in Chief Sir Ian Hamilton was replaced by Charles Munro as the evacuation programme got under way.

## THE EVACUATION FROM THE COVE

### THE BLOODSHED HAD GONE ON FOR TOO LONG AND BY NOVEMBER 1915, IT WAS TIME TO WITHDRAW FROM ANZAC COVE

After the loss of Hill 60 on 29 August 1915, commanders decided that withdrawal was now the only option available to the British. The idea of reinforcement and navy barrage was toyed with but on 13 November Lord Kitchener observed ANZAC Cove and declared an imminent evacuation. The ANZAC role in Gallipoli was over.

## 04 REDUCING THE GARRISON

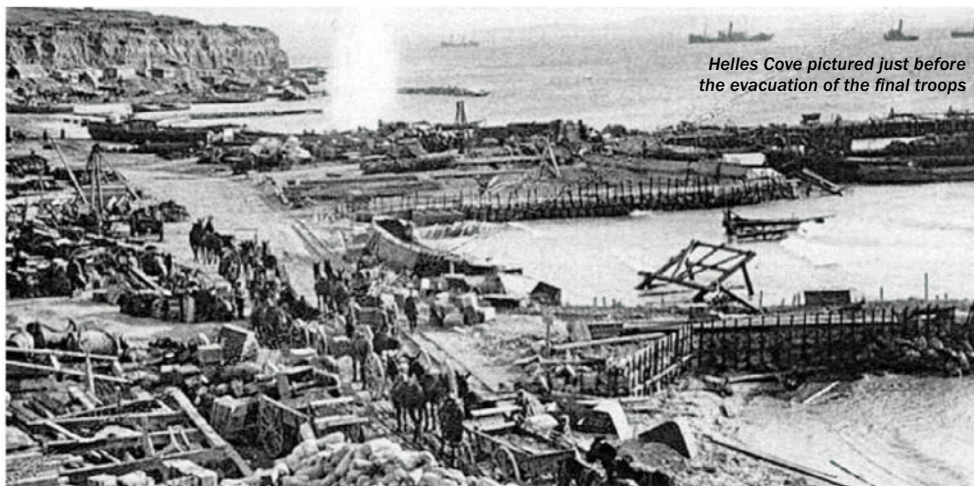
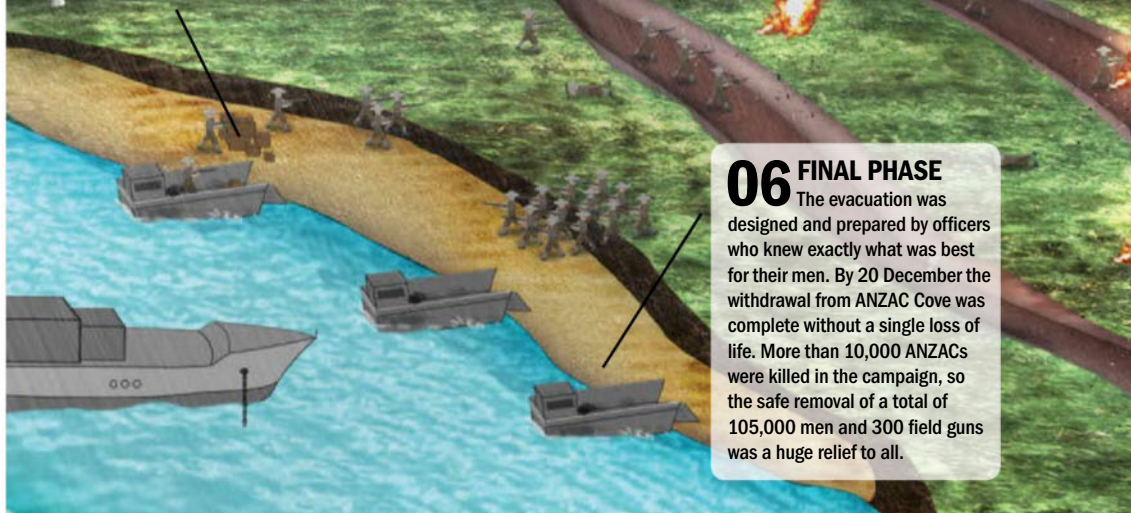
Beginning on 15 December, 36,000 ANZAC soldiers were withdrawn over five nights. Troops were evacuated in small batches and unneeded ammunition was buried or destroyed. Machine gunners were left to the final night due to their heavy loads of equipment. The riflemen departed, setting up drip rifles as they went.

## 01 PREPARATION FOR DEPARTURE

The ANZAC troops had heard rumours of an evacuation so, to maintain order, the commanders informed their troops that they were heading to Lemnos, Greece, for a rest. To prepare for this false journey, the military stores were emptied of all supplies. The infantry remained suspicious.

## 06 FINAL PHASE

The evacuation was designed and prepared by officers who knew exactly what was best for their men. By 20 December the withdrawal from ANZAC Cove was complete without a single loss of life. More than 10,000 ANZACs were killed in the campaign, so the safe removal of a total of 105,000 men and 300 field guns was a huge relief to all.



Helles Cove pictured just before the evacuation of the final troops



**03 DELAYS AND UNREST**

The few troops remaining now left meant that the Ottomans could break through within a week if the evacuation was not complete. Worse still, a blizzard battered the shoreline on 7 December making evacuation extremely difficult. The ANZAC morale was low as they realised they were leaving the fallen behind.

**02 SILENT STUNTS**

From late November onwards it was declared that no artillery fire or sniping would be allowed. The belief was that the Ottomans would see this as the ANZAC preparing for winter rather than a withdrawal. Irregular rifle fire kept the enemy unaware of any scale back in strength.

**05 EVACUATION IN FULL FLOW**

More and more transports arrived to ferry the troops to safety. First in the pecking order were support troops and reserves. The fighting units were removed gradually so they could keep fighting the battle and provoking the Ottoman lines. By 19 December, only 10,000 troops remained.

**THE NIGHT OF THE EVACUATION**

**FLEEING UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, THE BRITISH USED A NEW RIFLE TO AID THEIR ESCAPE**

Churchill was convinced that the Gallipoli Campaign was a good idea, but even he had to give up the ghost as the new year dawned. After approximately 200,000 Allied casualties, the decision was taken to cut losses and evacuate in December 1915. ANZAC Cove was the first to be abandoned and 36,000 troops were cleared within five nights with no loss of life. The next areas to be evacuated were Suvla Bay and Helles Bay. The last troops stepped on to the transports on 9 January 1916. Gallipoli was over and 142,000 men had been rescued.

William Birdwood was in charge of the evacuations and they were undoubtedly the biggest success of the whole campaign. The forces were moved under the cover of darkness as they kept up their attacks during the day to not draw attention to the imminent withdrawal.

It was so sneaky that the Ottomans shelled empty trenches after the British forces were long gone. The successful evacuation is partly down to an innovative tactic used by the British – the drip rifle. Using a simple system of water cans and string, rifles were set up to fire automatically at the Ottomans while the remaining troops scampered to safety.

**FIRST MECHANISM**

Invented by Australian Lance Corporal William Scurry, the top can is filled with water, which drips into the lower can after the fleeing soldier punches a hole in the bottom.

**SANDBAG SUPPORT**

Propped up on the top of a trench, the drip rifle would be aimed at the Ottoman positions to keep them at bay as the soldiers retreated.

**SECOND MECHANISM**

The bottom can is attached to string, which pulls the trigger once the can is heavy with water. The firing would be sporadic but convincing enough to fool the Ottomans.





## A successful evacuation

The ANZAC contingent had now been stationed at the cove for a number of months and it wasn't soon until winter would arrive in Gallipoli. Despite being exhausted, the decision to evacuate was kept from the ANZAC troops as long as possible. These troops had come halfway around the world and even though many were diseased and sick, the decision to retreat when they had made little to no territorial gain would crush morale.

The evacuation was covered up by a false restocking mission to Lemnos but whispers were frequent and by November the game was up. This was to be no quick withdrawal though. The evacuation was to be done in stages and in the most discreet way so the Ottomans did not suspect a thing.

By day the ANZACS would keep up their attacks as usual but by night, a careful retreat was devised. Small numbers would depart as the rest of the division fired sporadically to give the illusion the troops were still fighting. The entire evacuation took five days and was so well disguised that the Ottoman artillery bombarded the empty trenches for days afterwards.

The ANZAC forces lost 8,709 Australians and 2,701 New Zealanders at Gallipoli, with many more, perhaps up to 20,000, wounded. The campaign was a complete failure but could have been so much worse for the British if it wasn't for the bravery and tenacity of these men from the other side of the globe.

In the grand scheme of things, Gallipoli was not a defining campaign, with events on the Western and Eastern Fronts much more significant in the fall of the Central Powers.

After the evacuation, the ANZACS went on to serve with distinction on the Western Front and many other theatres of war in World War I. The events of 1915 still live long in the memory of Australians, New Zealanders and also Turks.

The success of the campaign under future president Mustafa Kemal kick started a Turkish revival that gave a renewed sense of identity and helped aid the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the Turkish War of Independence. Back Down Under, remembering the sacrifice is an annual tradition and for two young countries, the experience bound them together.

## THE ANZAC LEGACY

### THE ANZAC'S HEROISM AND BRAVERY AT GALLIPOLI LIVES ON TO THIS DAY

A celebration of the wartime spirit shown by soldiers from Australia and New Zealand, the first ANZAC Day was in 1916 and has been going ever since, with marches and services throughout the two countries. The day begins at dawn on 25 April, the date that ANZAC troops first landed on the peninsula. Rosemary is traditionally worn as it was commonly found on the battlefields at Gallipoli. There is also a tradition of making the ANZAC biscuit to remember the rations sent from home to the frontline. A special year for the remembrance was 1990, when veterans went back to the site of the battles to commemorate the 75th anniversary.

## "THEY EARNED A REPUTATION AS TOUGH FIGHTERS"

WE SPEAK TO DR DAMIEN FENTON, HONOURARY RESEARCH FELLOW AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND, ABOUT THE ANZAC CAMPAIGN



### WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF THE ANZACS IN THE CAMPAIGN?

The original role of the 30,000-strong ANZAC was to carry out a landing near Gaba Tepe and support the British landings

at Cape Helles by advancing inland to capture the Sari Bair Range and Maltepe, thereby cutting the Ottoman lines of communication with their troops at Helles. Instead they landed at the wrong place – Ari Burnu (ANZAC Cove) – and ended up defending their tiny six kilometre squared beach head for the next three months while the British and French concentrated on trying to break out of Cape Helles.

In late July, the MEF's attention switched to the ANZAC enclave, which became the focal point of the Sari Bair Offensive in August. The ANZACS played a leading role in this ultimately doomed offensive and suffered accordingly – ANZAC casualties for between 6 and 10 August amount to 12,000. After more heavy fighting in late August to consolidate the link-up between ANZAC and Suvla, the ANZACS settled back into the daily grind of trench warfare to defend their now greatly expanded perimeter until the final evacuation in December.

### WHAT TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS AND METHODS OF WARFARE WERE USED BY THE ANZACS?

The volunteer citizen-soldiers of the AIF and NZEF who served in Gallipoli in 1915 had been organised, trained and equipped on the basis of pre-war British Army

regulations, albeit with a few local variations in uniform and equipment. Infantry brigades predominated but both expeditionary forces contained a high proportion of mounted infantry regiments, Australian Light Horse and New Zealand Mounted Rifles accordingly.

The 25 April landing was an all-infantry affair with the mounted regiments arriving at ANZAC as reinforcements on 12 May, without their horses. The infantry and mounted troops from both Dominions soon earned a reputation as tough, aggressive fighters who quickly adapted to the conditions of trench warfare. Their field artillery batteries were equipped with modern 18-pounders and 4.5-inch howitzers, which, to the surprise of the ANZACS, made them better equipped than many of the British Territorial or New Army artillery batteries sent out to Gallipoli.

### HOW DID THE AUSTRALIAN UNITS DIFFER FROM THE NEW ZEALAND UNITS?

It was often hard for outsiders to distinguish the soldiers from the two Dominions, much to the annoyance of the New Zealanders, who usually found themselves mistaken for Australians. In 1914-15, the famous 'Aussie' slouch hat was actually also standard kit for most New Zealand infantry and mounted units. This changed when the NZEF adopted the 'lemon squeezer' felt hat as a deliberate effort to differentiate themselves from the AIF. In demeanour, the New Zealanders were often noted as being less boisterous than the Australians and more willing to take prisoners but in terms of fighting ability, there was nothing between them.



This painting by Walter Armiger Bowring shows the ANZACS returning home

Images: Alamy, Corbis, Rebekka Hearl, Osprey





# THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

founded 1980

## the Great War 1914-18: understood



Gallipoli is now wreathed in symbolism for Turkey, and for Australia and New Zealand. But, for the French and British, who supplied the majority of the allied troops, it remains a bloody failure. Arguably a fine plan, but one clearly signalled to the valiant defenders, it was poorly executed despite great bravery, and led to costly stalemate.

The Great War is a fascinating subject, with a complex blend of military, social, science, political and economic history. To understand more about the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, its fateful execution, the withdrawal, and to examine the range of consequences, please **join us at The Western Front Association.**

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Great Battles

# AUSTERLITZ

Napoleon's grip on Europe was getting stronger, but a 85,000-strong coalition had amassed to end the aggression once and for all

WORDS JACK GRIFFITHS

## AUSTERLITZ, MORAVIA 2 DECEMBER 1805

### WHO

The Grande Armée came up against the Russians and Austrians in what was the Third Coalition against Napoleon.

### WHAT

The victor of this decisive battle would become the dominant force in Central Europe and the greatest of the three emperors.

### WHERE

Austerlitz was a small town in the region of Moravia just over 100km from the centre of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna.

### WHY

With an invasion of Britain no longer an option, Napoleon had turned his attention eastwards to Austria and Russia.

### OUTCOME

Napoleon records a stunning victory that causes the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire and the end of the Third Coalition.





Austerlitz was a significant battle that marked the end of the Third Coalition and the demise of the Holy Roman Empire



Freevectormaps.com; Corbis



Ever since the turn of the 19th Century, Western Europe had been a battleground. The Empires of old had been struggling against a reinvigorated First French Republic, and by 1803 a Third Coalition had been created to oppose Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Originally, the French had wanted to invade Britain, but their loss to the Royal Navy at Trafalgar and the subsequent Treaty of Amiens meant Napoleon began to cast his eyes eastwards. Having already secured Spain as an ally, the two powers that stood in the way were the Habsburg Monarchy and what remained of an ailing Holy Roman Empire, plus the mighty Russian Empire. Led by Francis II and Tsar Alexander respectively, the war would now be fought between three emperors.

Napoleon was a shrewd tactician, with the loyal and resolute Grande Armée at his disposal. His strategic nous was evident as soon as the war began in September 1805, as French troops scored victories against the Austrian army at Ulm and Munich. There was seemingly no stopping the Grande Armée, which had crossed the Rhine and emphatically swept across the continent. This was followed by the quick capture of Vienna in November of that year. Vienna was the capital and centre of the Habsburg Empire, and its swift occupation shocked the major powers. There had to be a response, and it came near the town of Austerlitz in the kingdom of Moravia. Would Napoleon be too strong, or would the old armies of the European kingdoms prove too strong?

### The battle plan

The battle took place atop the Pratzen Heights. It was foggy on the morning of 1 December, as vast regiments from three armies amassed and awaited orders from above. The Russians stood in the winter cold, confident that the excellent artillery within its ranks would dismantle the French regiments. The Austrian cavalry, armed with their cold steel, were considered among the best mounted troops in the world. In total, the allied coalition numbered 85,000 Russians and Austrians.

The generals were confident of stopping the French advance, and had outlined a plan devised by Austrian Chief of Staff General Weyrother. The strategy was designed to target the French right flank in an attempt to force them southwards and open up a path to retake Vienna. Russian General von Buxhoevden, who would be joined on the opposite side by

*Napoleon's artillery divisions favoured light cannons and howitzers that were part of the Gribeauval or Year XI artillery system*



*The French forces were impeccably organised and committed to their emperor and the glory of the First French Republic*

General Bagration, would lead this advance. The centre would be held in reserve to keep the flanks steady. In charge of all the allied operations was Field Marshal Mihhail Kutuzov, but he was soon brushed aside in favour of the direct leadership of Tsar Alexander I, who was hungry for an all-out assault to finally crush the Grande Armée.

The Austrians and Kutuzov were willing to wait and force Napoleon's hand, but Alexander was far too reckless to even consider this approach. The Emperor would rather listen to his own desires than the Commander-in-Chief and besides, the Austrians were not be trusted after their capitulation in battle at Ulm a few months prior.

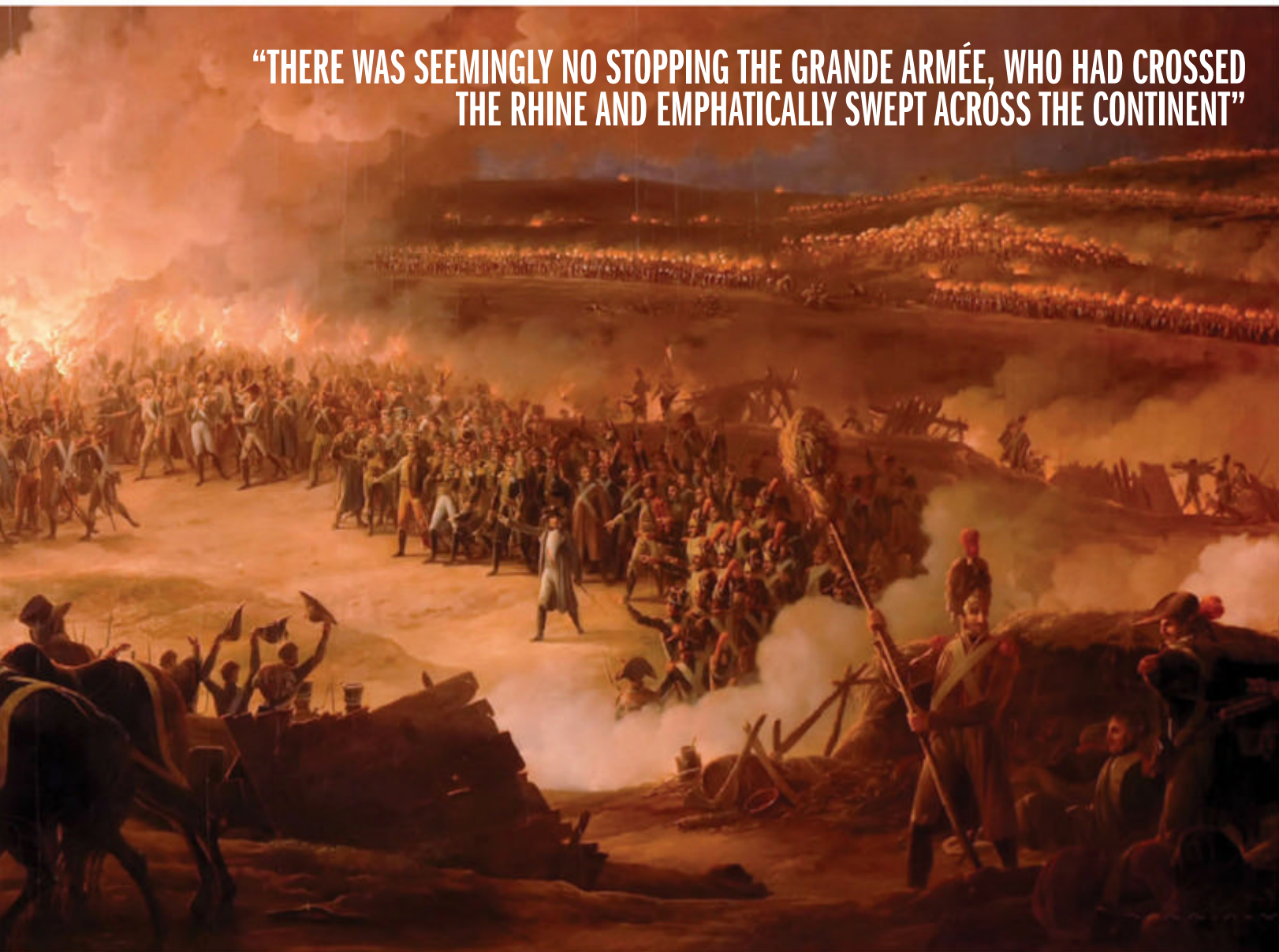
Napoleon, meanwhile, had a strategy of his own. After having failed to prevent the two Russian armies linking up, Austerlitz now

became the location of the French Army's stand. The right side of his forces, which the coalition saw as a potential fragile point, was falsely weakened by the Emperor to draw the allied troops in. If General Legrand's IV Corps could hold the Russians and Austrians here, the soft underbelly in the centre of the coalition was there for the taking. Napoleon, a self-made general, even rode with his troops into the heat of battle – a very different approach to the old-style Austrian and Russian emperors. The French numbered 73,000, as they lacked the VIII Corps that remained posted in Vienna, the II Corps who were watching the Alps and the VI Corps stationed in Carinthia. Shrewdly, Napoleon sent his aide, Anne Jean Marie René Savary, to negotiate an armistice and deceive the Allies into thinking that the French lacked confidence. While this was happening, his soldiers organised and equipped themselves.

**“NAPOLEON EVEN RODE WITH HIS TROOPS INTO THE HEAT OF BATTLE, A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH OLD-STYLE AUSTRIAN AND RUSSIAN EMPERORS”**



“THERE WAS SEEMINGLY NO STOPPING THE GRANDE ARMÉE, WHO HAD CROSSED THE RHINE AND EMPHATICALLY SWEEP ACROSS THE CONTINENT”



Napoleon based his army on organisation and professionalism, and his popularity was at an all-time high with the French troops, who were at the peak of their morale, this battle being on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation. This boosted the Grande Armée, which was on the point of exhaustion after a long campaign through central Europe.

The Third Coalition was aware of the French fatigue, but had problems of its own. The allied force was 70 per cent Russian and 30 per cent Austrian, so many of the orders given out had to be translated back and forth between two languages, which made it difficult to undertake a complex strategy. However, they were pinning their hopes on reinforcements from both Archduke Ferdinand Karl Joseph to the north-west and Archdukes Charles and John from Italy to the south. This was enhanced further by 4,000 Austrians and 12,000 Russians already on their way to the battlefield, and would arrive in the next few days. If the battle could be delayed just a bit, then the coalition's numbers would increase dramatically. However, this way of thinking was never on Alexander's mind; he would defeat Napoleon there and then.

### The battle begins

Overnight the weather had remained foggy, which hid the French deployment. Just before 7am on 2 December, the allies spied what looked like a panicked retreat by the French from the Pratzen Heights. In line with their initial strategy, 40,000 Russian troops moved south towards Napoleon's right wing that had just hurried from the heights.

Over the ridge, 10,500 French lay in wait, and fighting began across the Goldbach stream near the village of Telnitz. The Goldbach would act as the dividing line between the opposing forces. The Russians and Austrians held the ascendancy in the battle's initial exchanges, and their strategy was going to plan, but their progress was checked in the village, where the late arrival of the French III Corps had swung the pendulum back in Napoleon's favour.

The French Emperor's original plan had been scuppered by the enemy not moving their entire force from the centre, but being a tactical genius, he had other ways of turning events to his favour. Led by General Davout, 4,300 men had been summoned by Napoleon to march 110km (68 miles) from Vienna to bolster the French forces. In one of history's closest shaves,

## OPPOSING FORCES



### LEADERS

Napoleon I, Claude Legrand, Louis Alexandre Berthier

### REGIMENTS

Imperial Guard, I Corps, III Corps, IV Corps, V Corps, Heavy cavalry and dragoon reserves

### ARTILLERY

139 guns

### GAME CHANGERS

The Grande Armée was battle-hardened, organised and willing to die for the emperor on the anniversary of his coronation

### LEADERS

Alexander I, Francis II, Mikhail Kutusov

### REGIMENTS

Imperial Guard, 2x Advance Guard, First Column, Second Column, Third Column, Fourth Column (All Russian), 3rd Austrian Infantry Brigade, Fifth Column (Austrian)

### ARTILLERY

278 guns

### GAME CHANGERS

The power of the Russian artillery was vastly superior to anything the French could muster



they managed to complete their march in 48 hours and arrive just in time to strengthen the right flank, which was buckling under the allied onslaught. In the shadow of the old fortress at Sokolnitz, the occupation of the heights changed hands frequently, but eventually Davout's men managed to end the stalemate and turn the tide to smash through the allied ranks. Despite a short rally from the Austrian O'Reilly light cavalry, the coalition troops began to flee. The battle had been turned on its head, and nearly all the allied advances had now been checked.

With the battle of the heights over, the conflict turned to the left and centre sides of the battlefield. An initial cavalry charge on the left flank saw horses from both sides slam into one another, while in the centre the Russian Imperial Guard launched into the French battalions as the coalition rallied. 3,000 grenadiers broke the first French line, and were only stopped after a timely artillery barrage. The imperial guard regrouped to allow their artillery to exact revenge and bombard the French, who had formed defensive squares on the battlefield. The coalition cavalry then struck the weakened squares and captured their only trophy from Austerlitz, the French Fourth Line's Eagle.

Napoleon, seeing the fight for the centre ground becoming a losing battle, sent his own imperial guard into the fray, with emphatic results. Scattered after their initial success, the Russian Imperial Guard did not maintain their line, and were easily picked off by the French counter-attack, boosted by the I Corps. This hammer blow crumbled the allied centre, and the battle for the left flank was still raging. The allied formation was split into two, and lacked a core. The French Divisions could now outmanoeuvre the scattered Russians and Austrians and attack them from all sides.

As the battle raged into the afternoon, young French General Lannes went on the offensive to the north of the battle in an attempt to strike down the Austrian divisions led by General Bagration. He almost succeeded, but was foiled after a battery of Austrian artillery made a timely intervention. The Austrians were still pegged back, but were not cut off from the rest of their force as Lannes had hoped. As Tsar Alexander took stock and analysed what had happened, he realised that the coalition high command had been torn from the main army, and unable to direct the battle effectively. Napoleon had the upper hand.

### Return to the Heights

Back on the right flank, ferocious man-to-man fighting meant the French had now occupied the heights, but were unable to press home their advantage as the coalition armies fought back bravely. Both sides were wielding primitive firearms, with the most popular being the .69 calibre smoothbore musket. This weapon was inaccurate and quite ineffective, with many shots not hitting the target sometimes resulting in friendly fire. This meant much of the battle saw fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

Using both bayonets and sabres, Austerlitz was a ferocious battle, with neither side holding back. The close-quarter fighting was backed up by artillery barrages from both sides. Although the allies had many more guns at their disposal, the organisation of the French

# Great Battles

## 2 DECEMBER 1805 AUSTERLITZ

### 01 Deployment and organisation

The coalition, with their superior numbers, were confident of complete victory but had not banked on Napoleon's strategic genius. The French emperor falsely weakened his right flank to concentrate on the opposition's weak centre and drew the Russians and Austrians into a trap on the Pratzen Heights.

### 02 Fight on the heights

The Pratzen Heights was full of villages, so the combat here was tight and tense. This played into the hands of the French, whose inferior numbers would have been an issue in open warfare. Crossing the Goldach river, the rival armies fought hard with neither able to break the deadlock.

### 06 Alexander re-evaluates

The French advantage shook the coalition leadership, who were fast losing their grip on the battle. By now, General Kutuzov had been wounded, and Alexander was in a state of shock. The Allies then proceeded to make a number of costly miscalculations as the retreat began and the Tsar fled.



**04** Battle of the Imperial Guards

The coalition centre was not as weak as Napoleon had planned. The Russian Imperial Guard made initial gains against its French equivalent, but was pegged back after an artillery barrage. The Russians responded with a bombardment of their own, resulting in their greatest successes in the battle.

**03** Cavalry clash on the left flank

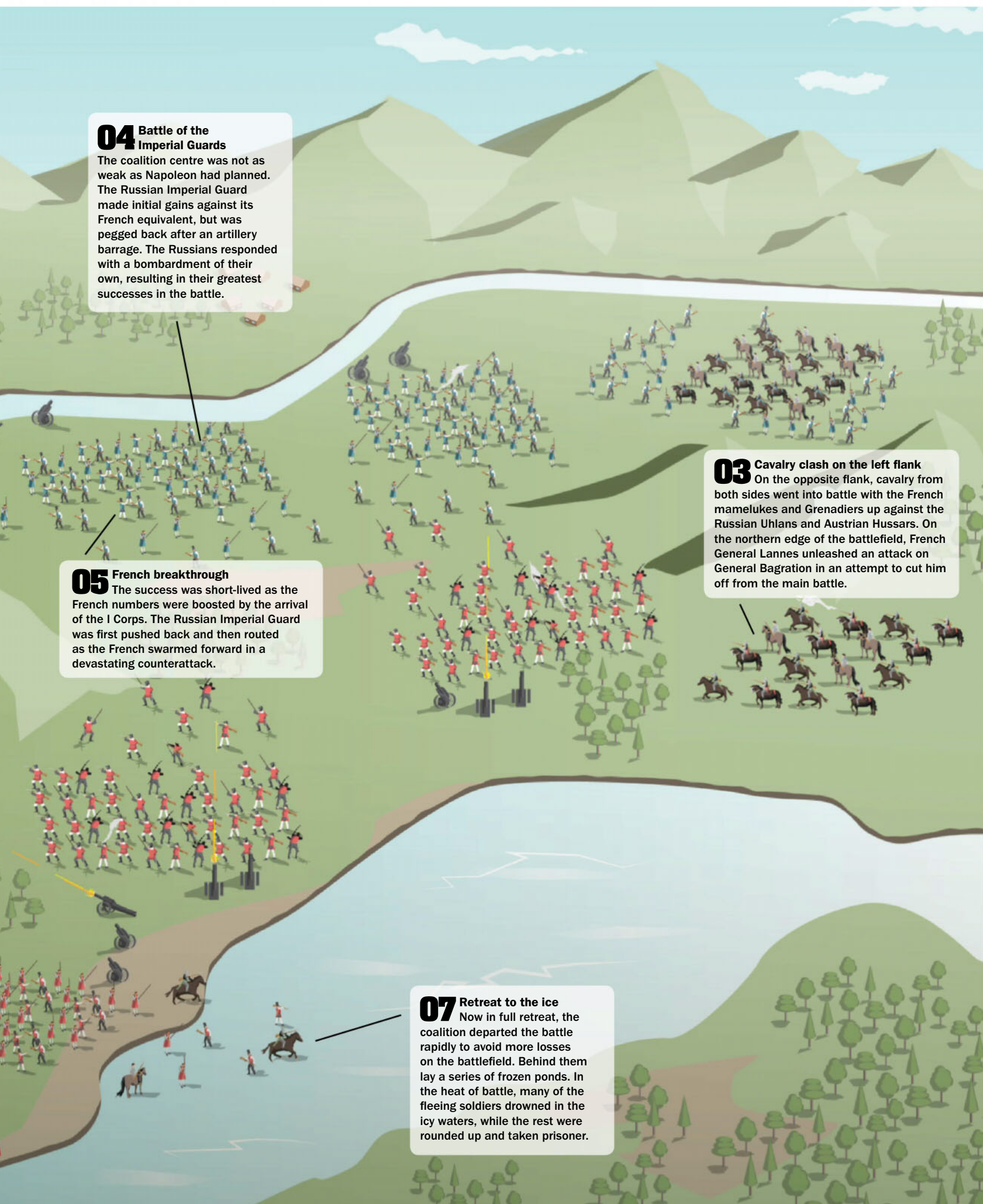
On the opposite flank, cavalry from both sides went into battle with the French mamelukes and Grenadiers up against the Russian Uhlans and Austrian Hussars. On the northern edge of the battlefield, French General Lannes unleashed an attack on General Bagration in an attempt to cut him off from the main battle.

**05** French breakthrough

The success was short-lived as the French numbers were boosted by the arrival of the I Corps. The Russian Imperial Guard was first pushed back and then routed as the French swarmed forward in a devastating counterattack.

**07** Retreat to the ice

Now in full retreat, the coalition departed the battle rapidly to avoid more losses on the battlefield. Behind them lay a series of frozen ponds. In the heat of battle, many of the fleeing soldiers drowned in the icy waters, while the rest were rounded up and taken prisoner.





**“THE IMPERIAL GUARD REGROUPED TO ALLOW THEIR ARTILLERY TO EXACT REVENGE AND BOMBARD THE FRENCH WHO HAD FORMED DEFENSIVE SQUARES ON THE BATTLEFIELD”**



*The only major success by the coalition armies was the capture of the French Fourth Line's Eagle by the Russians*



troops meant their shots were more effective and frequent. This lack of cohesion in the coalition also meant that the powerful Austrian cavalry could not be utilised effectively, and was often found too far to the rear to do any lasting damage to the French lines. In the latter stages of the battle, the Tsar saw that victory was becoming more and more unlikely, so fled the field. It was also at this time that allied General Kutuzov received a wound and had to be treated in the safety of a reserve unit. The coalition was now leaderless, and unable to co-ordinate effective attacks. An unsupported Russian Uhlan attack on the north flank that suffered 400 casualties demonstrated this.

Behind the Russian and Austrian regiments lay a number of frozen ponds known as the Satschan Mere. As the French piled forward, the allies had no option but to flee across the ice. Saddled with heavy artillery and the remaining horses, the winter lake could not hold the weight, and as the French drew near, many fell into the freezing water and became the victim of the sub-zero temperatures. The remainder of the troops were bombarded by artillery or taken prisoner as soon as they reached the lake's shores.

Contemporary accounts have claimed that the number of allied deaths in the Satschan Mere were greatly exaggerated, but nonetheless, the coalition divisions were scattered and leaderless, and defeat was now almost inevitable. 11,000 Russians and 4,000 Austrians lay dead in the mud as a victorious Grande Armée mopped up the remaining coalition soldiers on the battlefield. 12,000 soldiers were captured, and the French helped themselves to 180 cannons from the Russian artillery. The weary French could now rest as the Russians retreated back to their homeland and the Austrians surrendered to their French enemy.

### The aftermath

Napoleon may not have defeated his adversaries as comprehensively as he would have liked, but he out-thought and out-fought



*Napoleon meets Francis II following the Battle of Austerlitz*

both the Austrians and Russians. His triumph was so great that many see the victory as when the Emperor began to lose touch with reality and began to concoct more ambitious ideas for his own Napoleonic Europe.

On the evening of 2 December, Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein, rode into the French encampment to negotiate a peace agreement. The hierarchy of the Grande Armée agreed, and Napoleon and Francis met two days later. After extended discussions, the result was the Peace of Pressburg. The treaty was a necessity for Austria, who had seen their lands taken and army in ruins, but the agreement greatly benefitted the First French Republic. France now had Trieste and Dalmatia under its rule, as well as a vast area east of the Rhine that bordered Bavarian and Prussian lands. Napoleon was keen to appease Prussia, so they did not enter a conflict with the French. As a result, he allowed his defeated foe free reign over Hanover.

The Austrians fared much worse than any other nation, and were forced to pay 40 million Francs in reparations. Most significantly,

the Holy Roman Empire dissolved after 1,000 years as a kingdom. The victory of a republican army against a monarchical one was an important turning point in warfare.

In the Russian Army, aristocrats still held the top roles and order was maintained by regular beatings. This meant the officers were often poorly trained, especially in comparison to the Grande Armée, who were well drilled by Napoleon and could easily adapt to new strategies and tactics. There were even reports that Russian general Friedrich Wilhelm Buxhowden was drunk during the battle. With the destruction of the Third Coalition, the political and military structures and attitudes of old had been eradicated.

The picture of post-Austerlitz Europe was a bleak one for all, bar Napoleon. The Third Coalition was in ruins, and with the Russians out of the picture, only Britain remained in the way of a confident and powerful French Emperor. The peace was not to last, however, and when the Prussians became more and more sceptical of the French in 1806, Europe was on the road to war once again.



*Russians retreat across the frozen lake Satschan, but Napoleon's cannons shatter the ice and many are drowned*



# THE SECOND ANGLO AFGHAN WAR

WORDS TOM FORDY

As the British and Russian Empires fight for dominance, it will only take one mission into Afghanistan for tensions to erupt

In 1878 the United Kingdom launched its second military action against the Emirate of Afghanistan in four decades. The First Anglo Afghan War had been a humiliating defeat for the British, with the slaughter of almost 16,500 soldiers and civilians. The second, triggered when a British diplomatic mission was refused entry to the Khyber Pass, would prove a decisive victory. Lasting two years, it saw a 40,000-strong force of British troops occupy much of Afghanistan. This led to the Treaty of Gandamak, a subsequent uprising of Afghan rebels and victories on the battlefield traded between British and Afghan forces. Eventually, the rebellion was brought to an end with the Battle of Kandahar.

In truth, Afghanistan was merely a pawn, played as part of a larger strategic conflict between Britain and Russia known as the Great Game. What started the Second Anglo-Afghan War was an act of simple one-upmanship in the battle for political and militaristic supremacy.

The Great Game, played out for almost 100 years, began with the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, following the nine-year Russo-Persian War. As part of the treaty's terms, modern-day Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Eastern Georgia were claimed by the Russian Empire, greatly improving its position in the region.

## Empire under threat

For Britain, the Russians' expansion into Central Asia posed a significant threat. India had long been considered the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire. With its increasing presence and power, the Russian Empire was in a position to overthrow or bring on side Central Asian political leaders, creating greater potential to destroy Britain's rule of India.

While control of Afghanistan would mean a major stronghold for either empire, the country's proximity to India made it an integral part of the struggle. The country was seen as an open pathway into British territory and could easily be used as the perfect place for the Tsar to launch an invasion of India. The British decided they must take control of it first.

Britain had difficulties with the Afghan leader Dost Mohammad Khan, believing him unable or unwilling to repel the Russian

Empire's influence. Dost Mohammad – the most powerful member of the Barakzai clan – had risen to the throne in 1826 following a lengthy civil war over control of the country. Britain attempted to directly insert itself in Afghan affairs, but negotiations with Dost Mohammad were unsuccessful. Consequently, Lord Auckland, the governor-general of India, ordered an invasion, beginning the First Anglo Afghan War. The objective was to remove Dost Mohammad from power and reinstate former ruler Shah Shoja, who had been overthrown and exiled almost 30 years earlier.

In December 1838, an army of 21,000 British and Indian troops set out from Punjab. By March, they entered Afghanistan, heading for Kabul and occupying Kandahar the following month. The journey, however, was hard. Advancing across rough terrain, 4,000-foot mountain passes and desert, the soldiers lacked supplies and were subjected to unbearable conditions.

Having also taken the city of Ghazni, the British restored Shoja to power. But the Afghan people violently opposed the occupation. Rebellion broke out and the following year Dost Mohammad led a force against the British at Parwan. Attacks by Afghan rebels against the occupying forces made the British position impossible to maintain. By 1841, Dost Mohammad had been deported to India, but his son Akbar Khan had great support from the Afghan uprising. The British failed to effectively retaliate against the rebels, weakening their authority even further. Eventually, political agent Sir William Hay Macnaghten was seized and murdered by Akbar Khan before negotiations could begin. His body was dragged through the streets and put on display.

## Massacre in the mountains

The decision was made to retreat and on 6 January 1842 some 4,500 troops and 12,000 camp followers marched out of Kabul and headed to Jalalabad. The military personnel mostly consisted of Indian units and a British battalion, the 44th Regiment of Foot. Among the 12,000 camp followers were servants and workmen, but also families of soldiers who had arrived in Afghanistan to boost British morale.







92nd Highlanders and 2nd Gurkhas storming the Gaudi Mullah Sahibdad at Kandahar

## KEY FIGURES



**ALEXANDER I OF RUSSIA (1777-1825)**

After becoming Tsar in 1801, Alexander was determined to expand the Russian Empire. He alternated between ally and enemy of Napoleon and entered into war with Iran, which led to the Treaty of Gulistan and triggered strategic conflict with the British Empire.



**DOST MOHAMMAD KHAN (1793-1863)**

Founder of the Barakzai dynasty, Dost Mohammad took power in 1826 and fought to maintain Afghanistan's independence. Ousted by Britain in the First Anglo Afghan War, he led a rebellion before surrendering. His legacy was felt into the second war.



**SHIR ALI KHAN (1825-1879)**

Crowned Amir of Afghanistan following the death of his father Dost Mohammad, his rule was dictated by the struggle between Britain and Russia. When war broke out over his refusal to admit British diplomats, he sought political asylum in Russia, leaving his son Mohammad Yaqub Khan to take charge.



**SIR NEVILLE BOWLES CHAMBERLAIN (1820-1902)**

A senior British officer in India, Chamberlain also fought in the Battle of Ghazni during the First Anglo Afghan War and other notable conflicts. He led the 1878 diplomatic mission that was turned back at the border by Afghan troops, directly leading to the British invasion of Afghanistan.



**BENJAMIN DISRAELI (1804-1881)**

This Prime Minister of Great Britain was noted for writing to Queen Victoria pledging to "clear Central Asia of Muscovites and drive them into the Caspian Sea." He appointed Lord Lytton in India and attended the Berlin Congress, the result of which focused unrest with the Russian Empire into Central Asia.



**ROBERT BULWER-LYTTON, FIRST EARL OF LYTTON (1831-1891)**

A British diplomat and viceroy of India, he famously declared that Afghanistan was merely "an earthen pipkin between two metal pots." Lytton's failure to send a successful mission into Afghanistan and persuade Shir Ali Khan to expel Russian influence was the catalyst for the conflict.



The 44th Regiment of Foot makes its last stand against Afghan warriors during its disastrous retreat from the First Anglo Afghan War



As the retreating force made its way through tricky snowbound passes, bands of Afghan warriors surrounded them. The retreat, which had been negotiated between Major General Sir William Elphinstone and Akbar Khan, became a bloodbath. Many were killed in the fighting, others dying of exposure or frostbite in the aftermath. Only one British soldier and a handful of Indians ever arrived in Jalalabad. Other Indian survivors were forced to return to Kabul, where they lived as beggars or slaves. Arguably, it was the worst, not to mention most humiliating, military disaster in British history up to that point.

While the First Anglo Afghan War had effectively ended, the Great Game continued. In 1857, the Indian Rebellion threatened the British Empire's rule. Meanwhile, the Russians continued southward through Central Asia, annexing Tashkent into its empire in 1865 and then Samarkand in 1868.

For the British government, Afghanistan was now seen as a buffer state. As the Russians rolled on towards it, amassing power and influence as they did so, the invasion or occupation of Afghanistan might have been seen as an act of war – or at very least, an irrefutable sign that the Russian Empire ultimately intended to march on India.

### Britain struggles for power

In November 1875, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli appointed Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 1st earl of Lytton as governor-general of India. By now, Russian influence was growing at an alarming rate in Afghanistan. As such, Lord Lytton became primarily concerned with India's relations with the Afghans. Lytton was under orders to counteract the Russian influence or overpower it by force.

In the years that followed, the major European powers were embroiled in the Great Eastern Crisis, which arose from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 to 1878 and subsequent Treaty of San Stefano. Britain, France and Austria opposed the treaty, claiming it gave Russia too much power in the volatile Balkans. Led by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the Congress of Berlin was held from June to July 1878 to revise the peace settlement and avoid the outbreak of war. Consequently, the Treaty of Berlin was created, stripping away the significant gains Russia had made in the Treaty of San Stefano.

That same month, the Russians sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul. Though uninvited, General Stoloyetov was admitted. Lord Lytton demanded the Amir of Afghanistan Shir Ali Khan – the third son of Dost Mohammad, who

## “RUSSIAN INFLUENCE WAS GROWING AT AN ALARMING RATE IN AFGHANISTAN... LORD LYTTON WAS UNDER ORDERS TO COUNTERACT OR OVERPOWER IT BY FORCE”

Afridi soldiers in 1878. The Afridis were an independent tribe, but impressed the British and were taken along to join the Anglo-Indian forces



1813

#### TREATY OF GULISTAN

At the end of the Russo-Persian War, the treaty gives the Russian Empire unprecedented power over Central Asian countries. Imperial Russia becomes a potential threat to the British rule of India.

1826

#### THE BARAKZAI DYNASTY

Following a lengthy civil war, Dost Mohammad Khan takes the throne and establishes the Barakzai Dynasty in Afghanistan. He is forced to balance his power with the political manoeuvring of Britain and Russia.

1839

#### FIRST ANGLO AFGHAN WAR

After unsuccessful negotiations, the British take direct action and send more than 20,000 British and Indian troops to occupy Afghanistan. The key objective is to restore Dost Mohammad's predecessor Shah Shoja.

1840

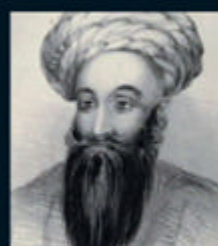
#### BATTLE OF PARWAN

After escaping from prison in Bukhara, Dost Mohammad returns to Afghanistan to lead a rebellion against British forces. Though it seems he has the upper hand, he surrenders the following day.

1842

#### SLAUGHTER OF ELPHINSTONE'S RETREAT

With the British position impossible to maintain, a retreat is negotiated. Sir William Elphinstone leads 16,500 people out, but they are slaughtered by Afghan tribal warriors.







“AFGHANISTAN WAS SEEN AS AN OPEN PATHWAY INTO BRITISH TERRITORY AND WAS THE PERFECT PLACE TO LAUNCH AN INVASION OF INDIA”

*Drummer James Roddick of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders defending Lieutenant Menzies during hand-to-hand fighting in Kandahar*

had succeeded to the throne following his father's death – to accept a British mission too. The Amir refused; he also threatened to stop the mission if it was dispatched.

**Troops descend**

Incensed that the Russians had been granted entry where he had been refused, Lytton ordered a diplomatic mission be sent that September. But the mission, led by Sir Neville Bowles Chamberlain, was turned back by Afghan troops at the Khyber Pass. Lord Lytton responded by launching a full invasion of Afghanistan, beginning the Second Anglo Afghan War.

On 21 November 1878, a British force of 40,000 – mostly British and Indian – descended on Afghanistan in military columns, penetrating the country in three strategic points. One of these columns, about 3,800 men under the command of General Sir Samuel Browne, reached the Ali Masjid fortress

at 10am but waited for the support of the other two columns before attacking. By the afternoon, the support still hadn't arrived – they were struggling to cross the difficult terrain and rivers in the dark, unbeknown to those already at the fortress. General Browne decided to stay on schedule and launched a frontal attack.

The 3rd Brigade crossed the River Kabul and stormed the fortress's southern entrenchments, while the 4th Brigade kept to the left side of the river to flank the east side. But the Afghan resistance was surprisingly strong; by 5pm both brigades had withdrawn.

At daybreak the next morning, still with no message or sign of the other two columns, a second attack was launched upon the fortress. When the Afghans failed to return fire, the British troops realised that the Afghan force had withdrawn during the night. The British considered themselves fortunate; a closer look at the fortress revealed it to be an impressive defensive structure – one that would have been

difficult to take had it been properly manned and armed. The Battle of Ali Masjid marked the first British victory in the conflict.

Shir Ali died in exile the following year, while the British army occupied Kabul. From there, the Treaty of Gandamak was drawn up, before an uprising triggered the war's 'second phase'. The British claimed ultimate victory following a decisive win at the Battle of Kandahar in September 1880, which left both the British and Russians to draw up the boundaries of modern-day Afghanistan.

As for the Great Game, it travelled eastwards, concentrating on conflict over the control of nations such as China, Tibet, and Mongolia. But soon enough, as the German Empire grew, the British and Russians decided they must call a truce and resolve their differences. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 brought an end to the Great Game and began an alliance that would fight a war unlike either empire had ever seen before.

**1843**

**DOST MOHAMMAD RETURNS**

After governor-general of India Lord Ellenborough commits to a complete evacuation of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammad returns from his exile in India and reclaims the throne, ruling for another 20 years.

**1857**

**INDIAN REBELLION**

Beginning as a series of mutinies among the East India Company, the rebellion forces the British Empire to reorganise its administration in India and creates a genuine fear for loss of power in Asia.

**1878**

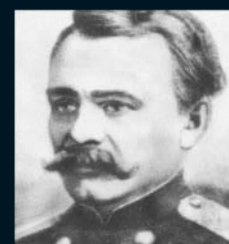
**CONGRESS OF BERLIN**

Congress calls to resolve an international crisis amid fears over Russian power following the Treaty of San Stefano. The congress weakens Russia's strength in Europe, intensifying the Great Game in Central Asia.

**1878**

**RUSSIAN MISSION RECEIVED**

Shir Ali Khan admits Russia's General Stolyetov in to Kabul, despite his arriving as part of an uninvited mission to Afghanistan. The British demand – and are denied – entry of its own mission.



**1878**

**CHAMBERLAIN'S ENVOY IS TURNED AWAY**

Despite being warned it would be refused, the British mission arrives. Sir Chamberlain's envoy is turned away at the Khyber Pass, giving Lord Lytton grounds to start the war.



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# ROMMEL



## GENIUS OF THE DESERT FOX

WORDS MATTHEW MOSS





The tragic story of Nazi Germany's most famous general, whose genius and audacity led him to be revered by both friend and foe

The legend of Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel has been firmly entrenched in Western history for over 60 years. Unquestionably Hitler's most-famous general, at the heart of his myth lies a remarkable man; driven, brilliant and supremely skilled, yet also flawed. Rommel could be brash, volatile and arrogant, and suffered from bouts of depression. At the peak of his career in January 1942, Winston Churchill described him as "a very daring and skilful opponent... a great general." In addition to being a great tank commander, Rommel was a brilliant tactician and exceptional leader, as well as a loving father and doting husband.

He commanded the devotion of his men and the respect of his enemies, becoming a legend in northern France and the deserts of North Africa. Using his trademark cunning and audacity, he beat the odds stacked against him on the battlefield, only meeting his downfall when he became embroiled in a world of politics he little cared for, and didn't fully grasp.

Born in 1891 in southern Germany, Rommel joined the army at 18.

Ironically, the man who would prove to be one of modern warfare's

greatest commanders was rejected twice before joining the infantry in 1910. He became a career officer, serving throughout the First World War, and was decorated with the Pour le Mérite, Germany's equivalent of the Victoria Cross. During the interwar years he became an instructor, training officers in the aggressive infantry tactics he'd developed during the war. With the rise of the Nazi Party, Germany again turned to her military, and Rommel found himself commanding the bodyguard of Germany's new Chancellor, Adolf Hitler.

### The Invasion of France

On 1 August 1939, Rommel was promoted to Major General, commanding Hitler's headquarters during the coming invasion of Poland. Just a month later, at 4.50am on the morning of 1 September, German forces crossed the Polish border.

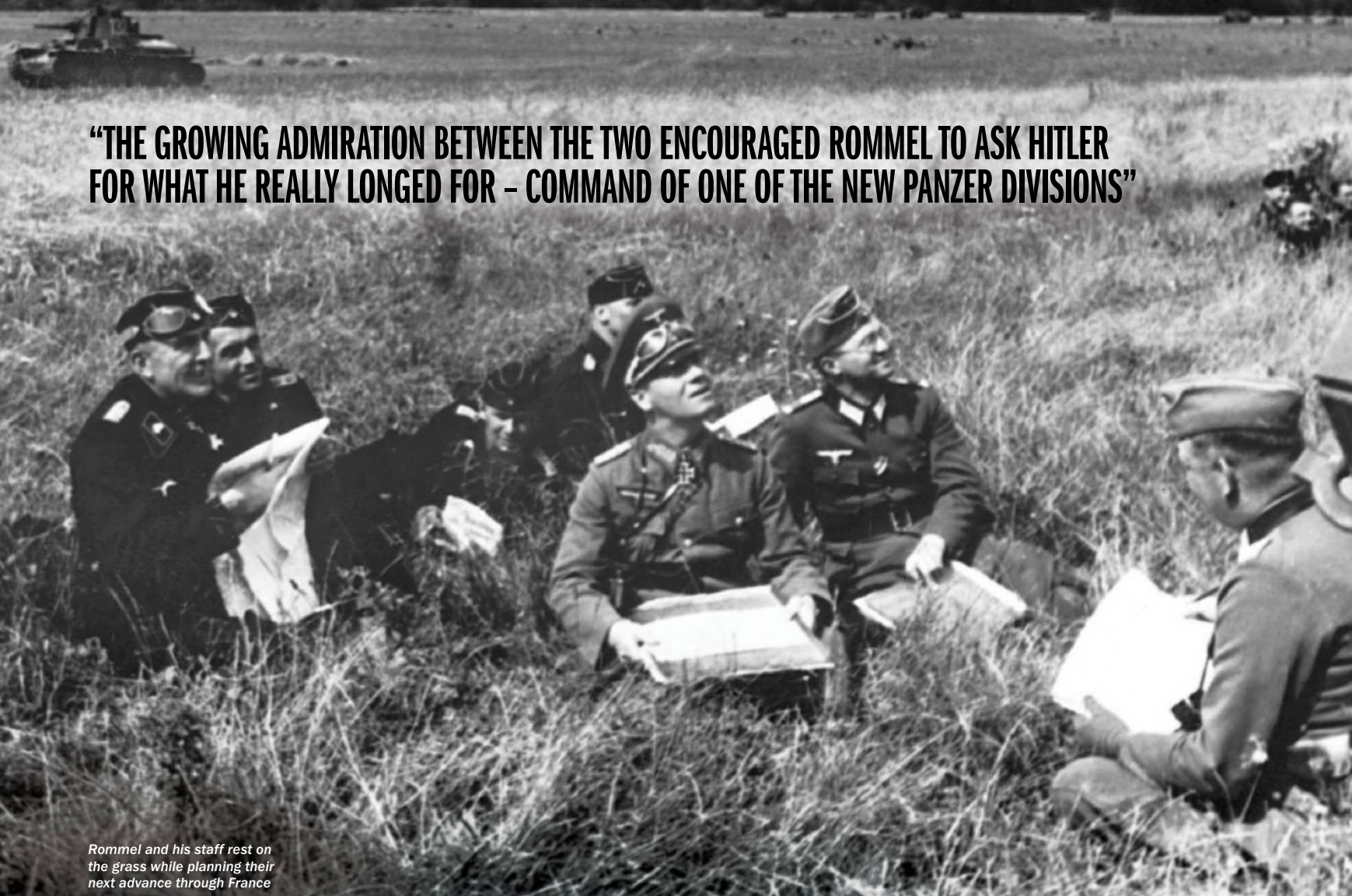
In charge of the security for Hitler's headquarters, Rommel was in a position to learn all he could of Germany's new way of war – Blitzkrieg. He found this tactic completely in step with his own decisive and energetic style of fighting. The general enjoyed an increasingly close relationship with the Führer, lunching with him and being invited to attend briefings. Writing home excitedly to his wife Lucie, he exclaimed: "I was able to talk with him for

**"HE COMMANDED THE DEVOTION OF HIS MEN AND THE RESPECT OF HIS ENEMIES, BECOMING A LEGEND IN NORTHERN FRANCE AND THE DESERTS OF NORTH AFRICA"**





## “THE GROWING ADMIRATION BETWEEN THE TWO ENCOURAGED ROMMEL TO ASK HITLER FOR WHAT HE REALLY LONGED FOR – COMMAND OF ONE OF THE NEW PANZER DIVISIONS”



*Rommel and his staff rest on the grass while planning their next advance through France*

about two hours yesterday evening, on military problems. He's extraordinarily friendly toward me!" The growing admiration between the two encouraged Rommel to ask Hitler for what he really longed for – command of one of the new Panzer divisions.

In February 1940, Rommel's wish was granted, and he was ordered to take command of the 7th Panzer Division. Early each morning he jogged a mile, intent on regaining his fitness after months spent with Hitler's headquarters. He was determined to be as fit for the coming campaign as any of his young officers – in just three months, Rommel had to learn his new role as a Panzer commander. He feverishly trained and experimented with his new command, devouring all the information on tank warfare he could find. On 9 May, Rommel received the order to ready his division for war. He frantically wrote a brief letter home, ending it with: "It's going to be all right. We jump off at dusk, how long we've been waiting for this moment!"

At dawn the next morning, the invasion of France began, and in just 20 days Rommel tore across northern France in what he later described as "a lightning Tour de France". The 7th Panzer Division moved so fast that at times not even German high command knew where

### THE FOX'S FORMATIVE YEARS FROM A SICKLY CHILD TO DECORATED WAR VETERAN

Born in Württemberg, southern Germany, Rommel was a sickly youth with dreams of becoming an aeronautical engineer. At 18 his father persuaded him to join the army, but both the artillery and engineers rejected him, before the infantry accepted him in 1910. Described by his Commandant as "firm in character, with immense willpower and keen enthusiasm... a useful soldier." Rommel proved himself more than just a 'useful soldier' during World War One. Fighting in France, Romania and Italy with bravery, skill and tenacity, he became adept at leading raiding parties behind enemy lines.

In 1915 he was awarded the Iron Cross for raiding French bunkers in the Argonne forest, losing just a dozen men. In Italy Rommel excelled, displaying a flair for independent and decisive action and in 1918 was awarded Germany's highest gallantry award, the Pour le Mérite, the famed 'Blue Max'. He ended the war as a captain, and despite its post-war decimation, remained in the army. During the inter-war years he published several books on aggressive infantry tactics. By 1937 he had reached the rank of Colonel and gained the attention of Germany's new Chancellor, Adolf Hitler.



they were, earning them the nickname 'the Ghost Division'. Naturally, Rommel led from the front, as his division burst out of the Ardennes forest to cross the Meuse river. Seeing engineers building a pontoon bridge under heavy fire, he leapt into the river waist-deep to help them.

The speed and unexpected direction of the German advance caused much confusion

among the Allies. On 15 May, after leading his division through the French town of Avesnes, Rommel and his staff paused when a French woman tapped him on the shoulder to ask, "Are you English?" Rommel politely replied in French; "No ma'am, I'm German!" Realising her mistake the French Woman ran back to her house screaming "Oh, barbarians!"





## BLITZKRIEG

### GERMANY'S REVOLUTIONARY 'LIGHTNING WAR' THAT BROUGHT FRANCE TO ITS KNEES

Between 1939 and 1941, Nazi Germany's army swept through Europe, overwhelming all resistance. The secret to their success was a new kind of war – Blitzkrieg. This combined a Panzer spearhead that punched through the enemy's lines with close air support – a concept alien to the Allies in 1940 – and fast-moving mechanised infantry following up the Panzers, exploiting their advance. This new combined-arms doctrine was developed in Germany by Heinz Guderian, who knew the key to rapid, decisive action was communication between the army's individual elements.

Blitzkrieg met its first test during the invasion of Poland in 1939 when German Panzers and Stuka dive-bombers smashed the Polish army in just a month. A year later, on 10 May 1940, the Panzers burst through the Ardennes Forest and raced across France, reaching the Channel in just seven days – a journey of over 200 miles. Erich von Manstein and Heinz Guderian masterminded the German strategy for the invasion of France – armoured divisions were to break through French lines and sweep west to the channel, causing the strategic collapse of the Allies.

Allied forces were stunned by the speed of the German advance – within days they were



psychologically shattered, harassed by the Luftwaffe and unable to muster for a counterattack. Outmanoeuvred, the British Expeditionary Force was forced to retreat to Dunkirk and was evacuated at the end

of May, leaving the French to fight on alone until they collapsed and surrendered on 22 June 1940. The concept of Blitzkrieg remains at the heart of modern mechanised warfare today.

Rommel recognised that maintaining momentum was critical, and he was willing to outpace the slower elements of the army to achieve success. He knew that despite the risks to his rear and flanks, by pressing deep into enemy territory he could deal a devastating blow to Allied morale and cohesion. The only time Rommel's strategy was threatened was on 20 May when a hastily cobbled together British brigade launched a counterattack into his division's flank near Arras. As British tanks attacked his position, Rommel was once again in the thick of the action. Despite being exhausted by ten days of constant fighting, he began directing artillery fire onto the enemy tanks. In his diary Rommel described just how close the action was: "Only rapid fire from every gun could save the situation. We ran from gun to gun... All I cared about was to halt the enemy tanks by heavy gunfire." Rommel only realised how dangerous the situation had been when his aide, who had helped him sight the guns, fell mortally wounded. He remained resolute, rallying his division to beat off the attack. While the counterattack never posed a real threat to the German offensive, it is notable as the first time Rommel engaged the British in battle.

Blitzkrieg perfectly suited Rommel's style of fighting and leadership. The battle for France had been a stunning success. Some of his Panzers had fought their way from Sedan to the Channel in just seven days, covering an astounding 200 miles. He had captured over 100,000 enemy troops,

**"THE BATTLE OF FRANCE HAD BEEN A STUNNING SUCCESS. SOME OF HIS PANZERS HAD FOUGHT THEIR WAY FROM SEDAN TO THE CHANNEL IN JUST SEVEN DAYS, COVERING AN ASTOUNDING 200 MILES"**

including the entire 51st Highland Division and the garrison of Cherbourg. Rommel's success vindicated his bold, swift and decisive style of command.

### Into the desert

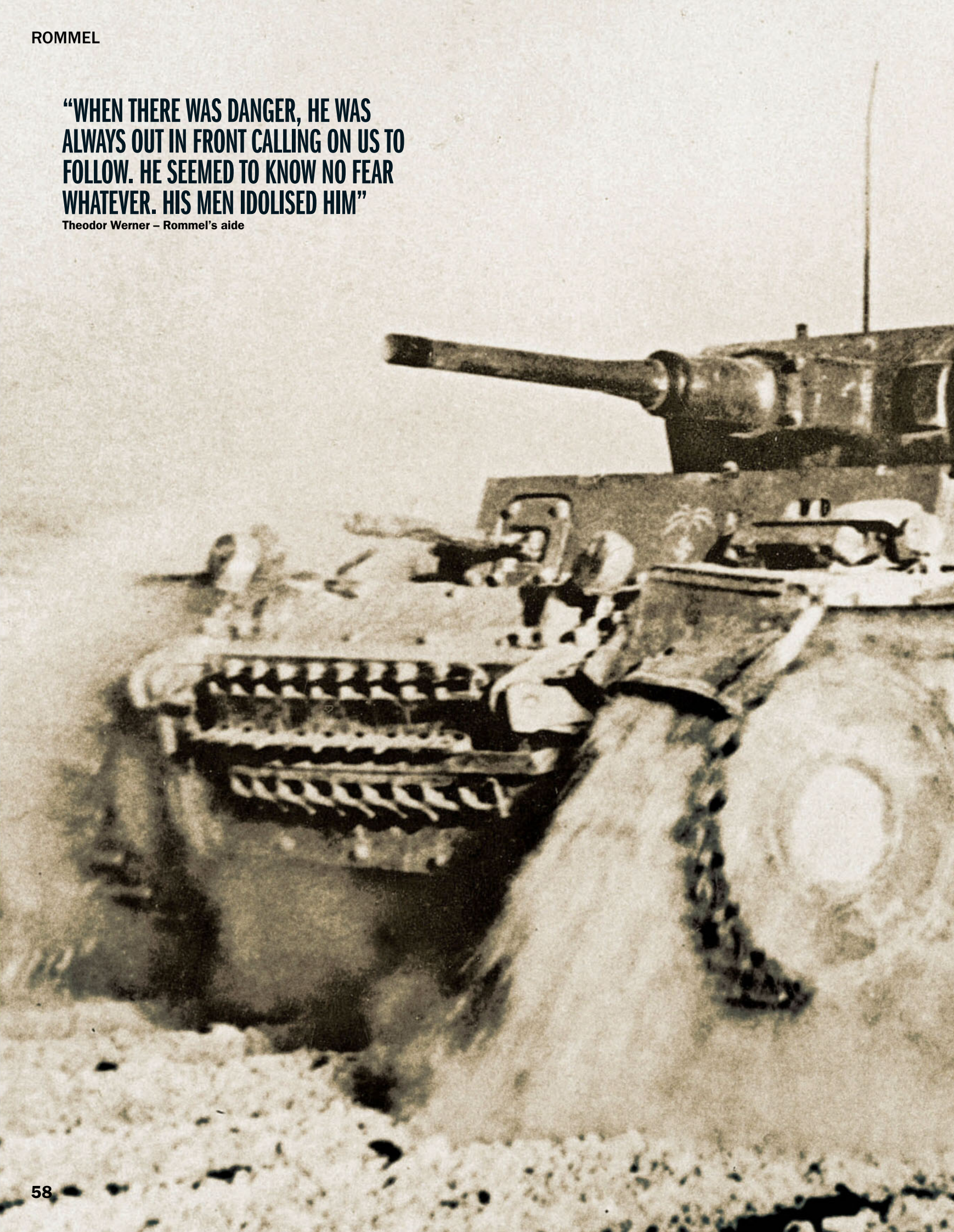
In February 1941, the general was given command of an expeditionary force and ordered to rally routed Italian forces in Libya. Over the next two years Rommel and the Afrika Korps covered thousands of miles of desert in some of the harshest conditions imaginable – oppressive heat, choking sandstorms and the constant shortage of water and fuel. The terrain of the western Desert was unique, a flat, stony plain 200 kilometres wide, separating the Mediterranean and the dunes of the Sahara. In April 1941, without waiting for his whole force to land, Rommel sensed an opportunity and struck the British, taking them by surprise and pushing them back 900 kilometres to the Egyptian border. The audacity and initiative of this attack became his trademark.

*Rommel first engaged British force during the Invasion of France, but would soon meet them again in North Africa*



**“WHEN THERE WAS DANGER, HE WAS ALWAYS OUT IN FRONT CALLING ON US TO FOLLOW. HE SEEMED TO KNOW NO FEAR WHATEVER. HIS MEN IDOLISED HIM”**

Theodor Werner – Rommel's aide







## THE AFRIKA KORPS

### GERMANY'S ELITE DESERT WARRIORS HONED BY ERWIN ROMMEL

The Deutsches Afrikakorps (DAK) was formed in February 1941, made up of just two divisions. Rommel was placed in command and rushed into action to Libya to bolster the reeling Italian forces there.

While the 'Afrika Korps' became the Allies' catch-all term for Axis forces in North Africa, the DAK was actually only part of a larger German-Italian force. When it arrived it boasted 300 tanks, with the majority of these being the lightly armed and armoured Panzers I and II. Rommel also had a number of the more formidable Panzer III and IV.

Deployed in the shadow of preparations for Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, the DAK was never made up of more than three divisions. By early 1942, Axis forces in North Africa had been reconstituted as Panzerarmee Afrika, with Rommel directly commanding both the Afrika Korps and six Italian divisions. Under Rommel's leadership the Korps gained a reputation as an elite force, always under-supplied and often relying on captured vehicles and fuel, but renowned for its toughness and fighting ability.





It was in the desert that Rommel showed his true brilliance, bringing together a disparate, poorly equipped and under-supplied army. Leading them across thousands of miles of desert, he used his instinct and daring to outfox half a dozen British generals. Rommel had the ability to inspire those around him with his own professional enthusiasm, from the lowliest private to the brigade commanders. His aide, Theodor Werner, later recalled: "Anybody who once came under the spell of his personality turned into a real soldier. However tough the strain, he seemed inexhaustible." Rommel himself knew it, and in March 1941 wrote home to Lucie that "much depends on my own person and my driving power."

Unlike typical corps commanders, who remained in their headquarters directing troops from the rear throughout engagements, Rommel always favoured being at the front, leading his men in sectors he identified as crucial. Werner remembered that, "When there was danger, he was always out in front calling on us to follow. He seemed to know no fear whatever. His men idolised him."

Rommel's successes cemented his reputation as the Wehrmacht's most popular general. The 50-year-old general cut a dashing figure in his leather jacket and dust goggles,



riding in the turret of his command tank. With success came fame at home, and in 1941, Joseph Goebbels' newspaper *Das Reich* attempted to re-write his life story painting him as one of the Nazi Party's loyalist early members. Rommel was outraged – ever his own man, he had never been a member of the Nazi Party. Despite the possibly fatal consequences, he demanded the lies be retracted, and *Das Reich* was compelled to print the correction of the general's background.

**“UNLIKE TYPICAL CORPS COMMANDERS, WHO REMAINED IN THEIR HEADQUARTERS DIRECTING TROOPS FROM THE REAR THROUGHOUT ENGAGEMENTS, ROMMEL ALWAYS FAVOURED BEING AT THE FRONT, LEADING HIS MEN IN SECTORS HE IDENTIFIED AS CRUCIAL”**

The Desert Fox's reputation for cunning and improvisation became legendary – he used tricks such as having trucks drag brush behind them to kick up enough dust to simulate an advance, only to strike elsewhere. He lured the unsuspecting Allies into deadly traps by feinting advances to draw in British tanks, only to lead them into ambushes. Most famously, at the Battle of Gazala, Rommel unexpectedly fell back to entice the British to attack into what he described as 'the Cauldron', where they



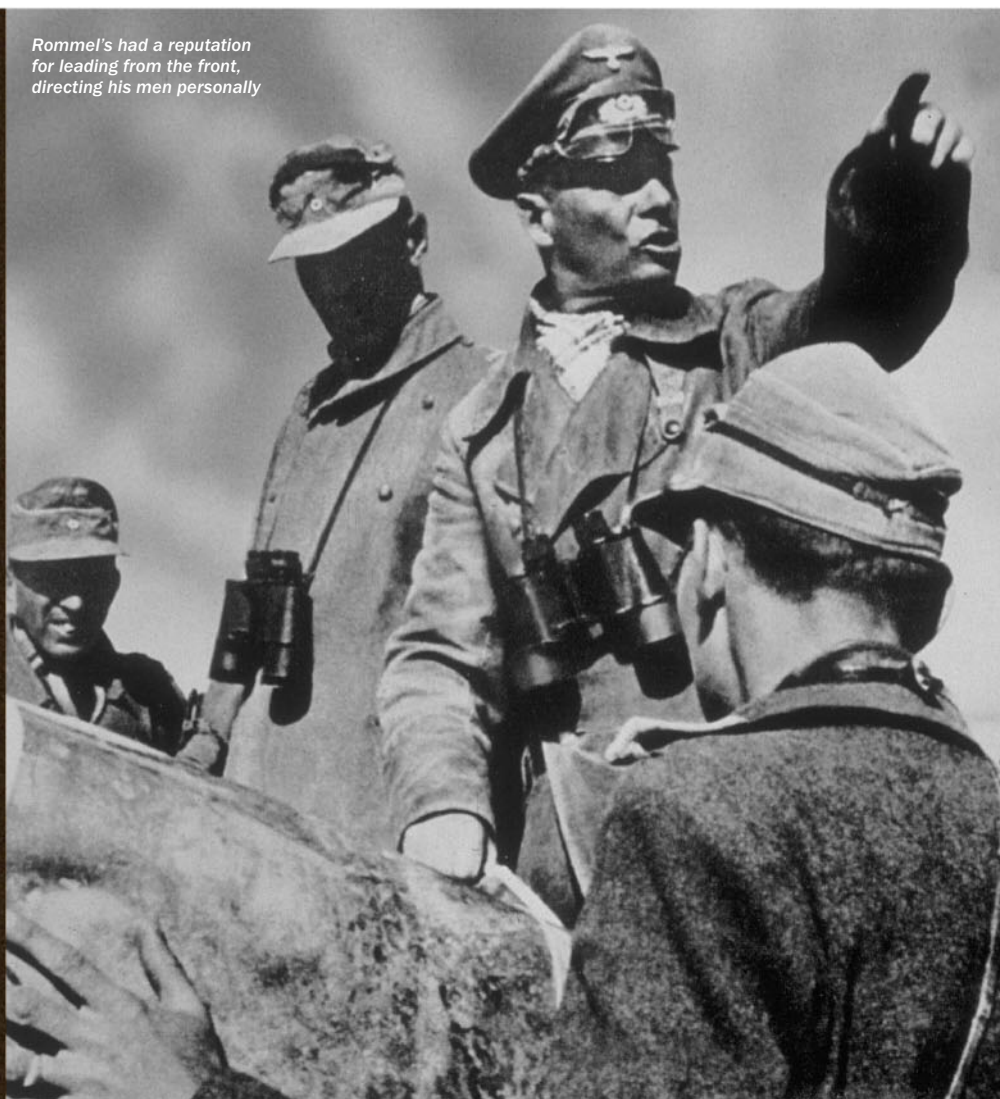
## DESERT CAMPAIGN THE LEGEND OF THE DESERT FOX IS BORN

Rommel arrived in Libya in February 1941, tasked with saving the Italian army. Even before all of the Afrika Korps had arrived, he sensed an advantage. Rallying his Italian allies, he stuck at the British Western Desert Force, halting their advance and pushing them back to the Libyan-Egyptian border, before laying siege to Tobruk. This began two years of battle, which raged up and down the North African coast. In November 1941, the British launched Operation Crusader, relieving the embattled port and forcing Rommel to fall back to El Agheila where his offensive had begun months earlier.

After being resupplied, Rommel launched his second offensive in May 1942, catching the British off guard again and capturing Tobruk. His audacity paid off, and he sent superior Allied forces reeling back into Egypt.

By July 1942, months of heavy fighting and a supply line stretched over 1,000km left Rommel with just 13 operational tanks – both armies were exhausted. The Fox was unable to convince Hitler that the campaign in North Africa was as vital as the invasion of Russia. As a result, the Afrika Korps was chronically under-equipped and under-supplied. In September, General Montgomery's 8th Army struck back first at Alam El Halfa and again at El Alamein. Rommel's last roll of the dice was anticipated by Montgomery, so the Afrika Korps was forced to begin a long and arduous retreat back to Tunisia. In March 1943, Rommel was recalled back to Berlin and in May the remnants of the once superior Afrika Korps surrendered.

*Rommel's had a reputation for leading from the front, directing his men personally*







*Rommel and his staff inspecting the beach defences along the French coast*

guns. For his victory at Gazala, Rommel was promoted to Field Marshal in June 1942.

However, Rommel's luck could not hold forever, and by mid-1942 he had overstretched himself raiding into Egypt in the hope of shattering the Allies' resolve as he had in France. While the desert was a tactician's paradise, it was a logistical nightmare, and Rommel struggled to supply his men throughout the campaign, relying on captured Allied supplies. At one point in July 1942, he had just 13 operational tanks, and was again forced to retreat into Libya. He wrote home in despair to Lucie: "This means the end. You can imagine what kind of mood I'm in... The dead are lucky, it's all over for them."

General Montgomery, the new commander of the British 8th Army, had studied Rommel's tactics and prepared meticulously. The British general defeated his rival at Alam el Halfa and El Alamein with an overwhelming superiority in tanks, men and aircraft. With the odds stacked against him, Rommel wrote home in despair: "Nobody can ever know the burden that lies on me, all the cards are stacked against us."

In February 1943, he won one last battle at the Kasserine Pass against US troops, but with limited ability to seize the initiative and exploit his early success, he decided to retreat before the Allies could concentrate their forces. By March, Rommel was physically and mentally spent, with his letters home increasingly despondent: "The end will not be long for we're being simply crushed by the enemy superiority... I wish I could get free of these terrible thoughts." On 10 March, the Desert Fox

was relieved of command in North Africa and placed on sick leave.

Not even Rommel's tactical genius could outweigh the numerical superiority the Allies brought to bear against the Afrika Korps. It is a testament to true skill that he was able to achieve so much with so little.

### Defending Fortress Europe

After a brief posting to Italy, where Axis forces fail to push back the Allied invasion, Rommel was transferred to France and tasked with inspecting and improving Hitler's Atlantic Wall. He understood that in Italy the Axis had lost the initiative by allowing the enemy to consolidate once they had landed. In France, he argued that it was essential that they position troops close to the coast to counterattack immediately, but this was challenged by his immediate superior, Field Marshal von Rundstedt.

Despite the static nature of the Atlantic Wall's coastal defences hampering Rommel's style of mobile warfare, his keenly practical mind was able to improve the defences. He was shocked to see how incomplete the work on the defences was in various sectors, and was able to tackle technical problems almost as well as he did tactical ones. He set about peppering the beaches with obstacles and filling the open fields near the coast with poles called *Rommelspargel*, or 'Rommel's asparagus', which would make it difficult for Allied gliders to land safely.

The Wehrmacht's standard tactic for dealing with amphibious landings involved a concentration of panzer and *panzergrenadier*

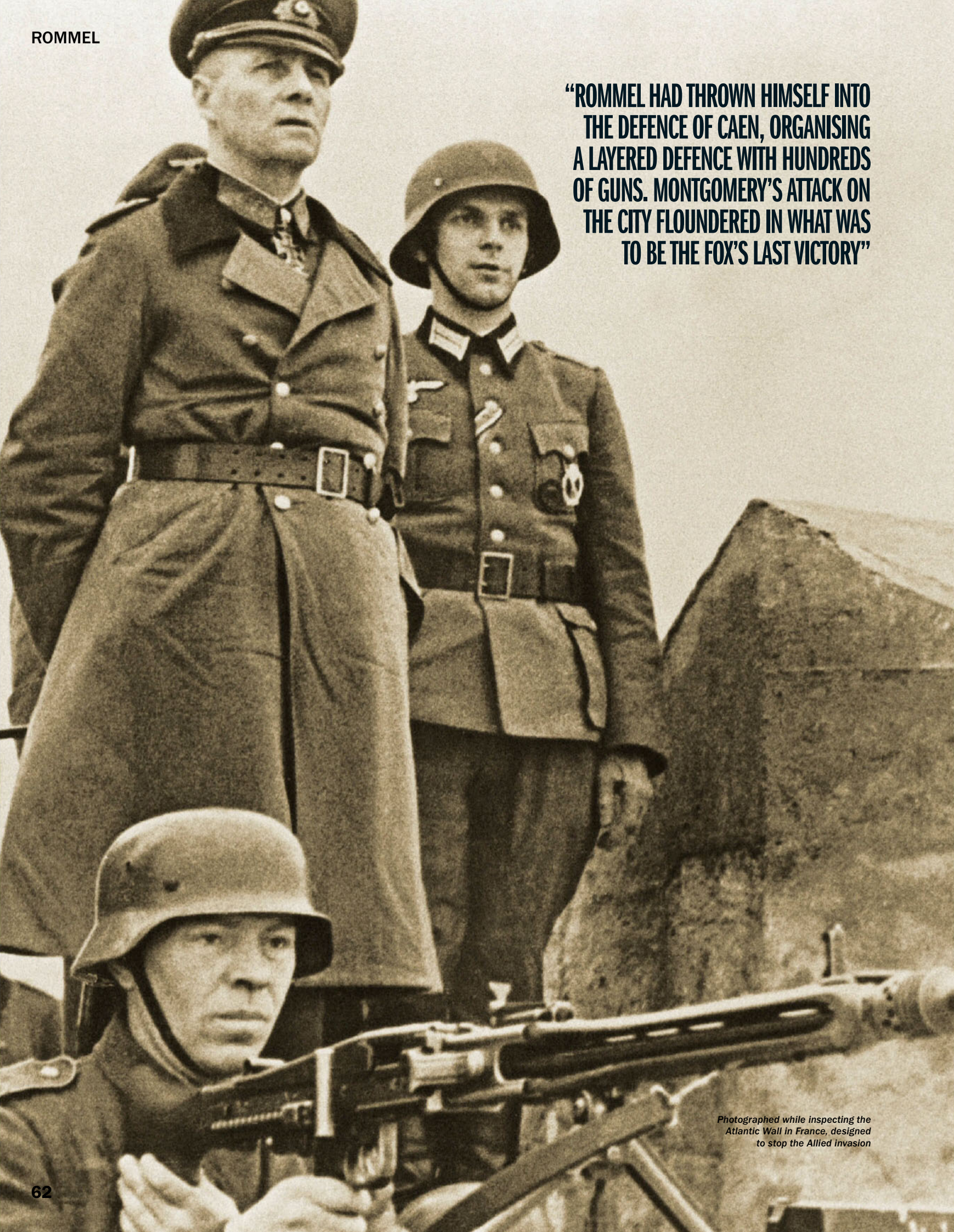
## DEFENDING NORMANDY PREPARING HITLER'S ATLANTIC WALL

As early as 1941, Hitler and the German high command began planning on how they would defend the Third Reich's extensive coastline. In March 1942, Führer Directive 40 officially ordered the construction of a series of defences along the western coast of Europe - running for 1,670 miles from the northern shores of Norway to the Bay of Biscay. The construction of what became known as the Atlantic Wall saw thousands of bunkers, gun batteries and resistance posts built. 40 million tonnes of concrete, 1.2 million tons of steel and thousands of miles' worth of barbed wire were used. In Northern France alone, 6 million mines were laid and the beaches were peppered with Czech hedgehogs, Belgian gates and *Hemmbalk* obstacles for ripping out the bottoms of landing craft.

The cost of building the Wall is thought to have been a colossal 3.7 billion Deutschmarks. Despite this, the Normandy beaches targeted by Operation Overlord were considerably weaker than those in the Pas de Calais area, where the German high command anticipated the landings would take place. The Luftwaffe had just 400 planes stationed in France, and the 50,000 troops available in Normandy were made up of invalids and second-rate units. While the 130,000 Allied troops that landed on 6 June met with initial success, they weren't able to break out of the beachhead until August - in part due to the dogged defence that Rommel organised.



**“ROMMEL HAD THROWN HIMSELF INTO THE DEFENCE OF CAEN, ORGANISING A LAYERED DEFENCE WITH HUNDREDS OF GUNS. MONTGOMERY’S ATTACK ON THE CITY FLOUNDERED IN WHAT WAS TO BE THE FOX’S LAST VICTORY”**



*Photographed while inspecting the Atlantic Wall in France, designed to stop the Allied invasion*





divisions on the enemy beachhead. However, this took vital days to prepare, and the strategy had failed a year earlier in Italy. Rommel began to consider alternative strategies, believing that the “enemy’s entire landing operation must under no circumstances be allowed to last longer than a matter of hours” and that the invasion could only be crushed on the beaches.

As his frustration at being unable to deploy his troops as he wished grew, he frequently took it out on his staff. One of his corps commanders in Normandy wrote home, saying, “If there’s something he doesn’t like, then all his pigheaded rudeness comes out.” In early 1944, he passionately argued to Hitler that “if we don’t manage to throw them back at once, the invasion will succeed in spite of the Atlantic Wall!” However, depression and self-doubt again consumed him as he became bogged down by his continuing feud with Von Rundstedt over the positioning of troops close enough to the coast to strike quickly. In April 1944, he wrote in his diary: “And what will history say in passing its verdict on me? If I am successful here, then everybody else will claim all the glory... if I fail here, then everybody will be after my blood.”

Despite these setbacks to his preparations, the general lost none of his grounded spirit as a soldier. In May 1944, he again displayed the chivalry for which he had become known when he interrogated Captain Roy Wooldridge, a British engineer captured while scouting the Normandy beaches. Two years earlier, Hitler had ordered that all captured commandos were to be shot. Instead, Rommel gave Wooldridge a packet of cigarettes and a meal before sending him to a POW camp.

On 6 June 1944, the Allies launched Operation Overlord, the long-anticipated invasion of France. As the enemy hit the beaches, Rommel was at home in Ulm visiting Lucie and his son Manfred. On hearing of the landings, he raced back to his headquarters. Throughout June, Rommel doggedly threw his men into the battle. At Villers-Bocage, Panzers and Allied tanks clashed in the region’s narrow country lanes. Around Caen, his troops managed to beat off successive Allied attacks. Rommel was no less energetic in Normandy than he had been in the desert, frequently covering 200 miles a day meeting with his commanders.

### The Fox’s Downfall

In North Africa, Rommel had been his own master, blissfully detached from Hitler and high command. Once back in Europe, he found himself embroiled in military and party politics and bogged down by the chain of command. But regardless of his growing pessimism and arguments with superiors, Rommel had thrown himself into the defence of Caen, organising a layered defence with hundreds of guns. Montgomery’s attack on the city floundered in what was to be the Fox’s last victory.

Several days later, on the evening of 17 July, Rommel’s staff car was driving down the main road towards Vimoutiers when a pair of roaming Spitfires dived, strafing his car with cannon and machine-gun fire. Rommel’s mortally wounded driver wrestled to keep control, but the car careened into a tree. Rommel suffered



Despite being supported by Hitler early on in the war, Rommel became implicated in plots to assassinate the Führer

### ROMMEL & HITLER THE GENERAL AND HIS PATRON

Rommel was uninterested in politics, but like many he was ensnared by Hitler’s charisma, believing him to be the best hope for Germany’s future. In 1937, Hitler had been impressed by Rommel’s book *Infantry Attacks*, and in 1938 appointed him the army’s liaison to the Hitler Youth before giving him command of his bodyguard in 1939. During the invasion of Poland, Hitler and Rommel became closer and Rommel enthusiastically wrote home telling Lucie that Hitler had made “soldiers worth something again.”

As Rommel left to command the 7th Panzer division, Hitler handed him a farewell gift, a copy of *Mein Kampf* inscribed: “To General

Rommel with pleasant memories.” With Hitler’s patronage, Rommel, who had stagnated as a captain for 15 years, rose to Field Marshal in just four years. Isolated in North Africa for two years, it was not until his return in 1943 that he realised the extent of Hitler’s madness and the hopelessness of Germany’s situation.

As the war dragged on, Hitler became increasingly deluded, refusing to listen to reason. With each attempt Rommel made to convince Hitler the war was lost, the further from grace he fell. Finally, in late June 1944, during a meeting of senior commanders, Rommel was determined to question the Führer’s plans. Hitler reacted furiously and dismissed him. Following the failed 20 July plot, Rommel was implicated and an increasingly paranoid Hitler ordered his death.

horrendous head injuries, and the first surgeon to examine him did not expect him to live. As had become characteristic of him, he would defy the odds and survive. However, his luck wouldn’t hold out.

By late 1944 it had become clear that Germany could not win the war, and it was Hitler’s decisions that were dragging the country down, so a group of officers began to plot how they could remove Hitler and make peace. Because of his popularity among the German people, as well as the respect he

commanded from not just fellow officers but also the enemy, the conspirators approached Rommel in early 1944. He was told of plans for a coup d’état to remove the Führer from power. The Fox, by his very nature, was loyal. Writing to his son Manfred in 1943, he said, “Only the man who has learned how to obey, even against his better instincts and convictions, will make a capable officer.” Despite this, Rommel had been questioning his own convictions and loyalty to Hitler. While he did not become directly involved, he became inexorably linked

**“ROMMEL HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLAN TO DETONATE A BOMB AT THE MEETING WITH HITLER, BUT THE PLOT’S FAILURE WOULD HAVE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE RECOVERING FIELD MARSHAL”**



to the conspirators. On 20 July 1944, as Rommel lay unconscious in hospital recovering from his wounds, an explosion ripped through a meeting room at Hitler's eastern headquarters, the Wolf's Lair. Hitler survived with minor injuries, but became gripped by paranoia and a massive investigation was launched. Rommel had no knowledge of the plan to detonate a bomb at the meeting with Hitler, but the plot's failure would have tragic consequences for the recovering Field Marshal. Rommel's name was found on a list of officers who would be key after a coup, and was even mentioned by tortured conspirators.

As the war in Europe entered its final stages, Rommel continued his recovery at his home near Ulm. On Hitler's orders, the Gestapo was busy rooting out and executing dozens of conspirators, and on 14 October two generals told him he had been implicated in the plot. They gave him a grim choice; a show trial before the People's Court or commit suicide with the guarantee his family would be safe.

Rommel faced this betrayal and impending death with the same bravery he had displayed on the battlefield countless times. Weighing up his situation, he chose to commit suicide. Saying goodbye to his wife and son, he left with the generals. 30 minutes later, the Fox was dead. Official reports claimed he'd suffered a heart attack, but in truth he'd taken the cyanide that the generals had brought with them from Berlin. Rommel's state funeral saw his coffin

## “ROMMEL FACED THIS BETRAYAL AND IMPENDING DEATH WITH THE SAME BRAVERY HE HAD DISPLAYED ON THE BATTLEFIELD COUNTLESS TIMES”

draped in a swastika, against the Fox's wishes, while Nazi party members eulogised. Hitler did not attend. His wife Lucie was forced to remain quiet about the truth behind her husband's death throughout the spectacle.

The legend of this talented commander has endured for over 60 years, with his masterful use of terrain and his ability to predict his enemy's next move marking him out as one of modern warfare's greatest generals. Rommel shot to fame as the energetic commander of the 7th Panzer division, but it was in the vast deserts of North Africa that his reputation as a tactical genius was cemented. Despite his flaws and struggles with depression, his ability to inspire men and use guile and cunning to outwit his enemies was phenomenal. He was charismatic and honourable – one of very few senior German commanders that not only ignored, but directly challenged Hitler's orders to kill Jewish soldiers and civilians, as well as captured Allied commandos.

His legacy is unique among his contemporaries, as he is the only general of the Third Reich to have a museum dedicated in his honour. He is immortalised as a brilliantly able commander who was betrayed by the regime he had loyally served.



Images: Alamy; Corbis; Getty

Against his wishes, Rommel's funeral was adorned with all the trappings of the Nazi party





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## Heroes of the Victoria Cross

# BILL SPEAKMAN

Outnumbered ten to one, this Black Watch private fought off waves of attacks from 600 soldiers for more than four hours during the Korean War

WORDS JACK PARSONS

**I**n a Highland Regiment, every individual feels that his conduct is the subject of observation and that, independently of his duty, as one member of systematic whole he has a separate and individual reputation to sustain, which will be reflected on his family and district or glen," wrote one 19th-century Black Watch historian. Whether thoughts of honour, gallantry and devoted service such as this ran through the mind of Private Bill Speakman on 4 November 1951 is uncertain. He may have been more concerned about the wave of Chinese soldiers that had overwhelmed his battalion.

Far from the Scottish Highlands of his regiment, but still set among rugged mountains and narrow valleys, Private Bill Speakman was one of 81,000 British servicemen to fight in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. Often thought of as an American conflict, Britain was actually the second largest contributor of the 21 countries that sided with South Korea in the UN's first ever armed response.

Previously part of the Japanese Empire, after World War II Korea was divided by the 38th parallel between the communist north and Western-backed south. When Northern soldiers crossed this boundary on 25 June 1950 with Stalin's permission and Chinese reinforcements waiting in the wings, Western forces, including the United Kingdom, passed a UN resolution to defend Korea from communist occupation.

Despite being in the Black Watch, William Speakman (always known as Bill) wasn't actually Scottish, having been born in Altrincham, near Manchester, England. He was inspired to join the Black Watch by his stepfather, who had served with the regiment during World War I. As a boy, his stepfather,



### FOR VALOUR

*The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military honour awarded to service men and women in the Commonwealth. It is awarded for valour in the face of the enemy and can be given to anyone under military command.*

#### WHY DID HE WIN IT?

Acting on his own initiative, Private Speakman led a small posse of six men armed with grenades to force back an overwhelming Chinese force long enough for his company to withdraw safely.

#### WHEN WAS HE AWARDED THE CROSS?

28 December 1951

#### WHERE WAS THE BATTLE?

Hill 217, Imjin River, Korea

#### WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE?

4 November 1951

#### WHAT WAS THE POPULAR REACTION?

While Korea is often considered 'Britain's Forgotten War' among public awareness, Speakman was the first person to be awarded the Victoria Cross by the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth II. His medal is now on display at the National War Museum of Scotland.

Bert Houghton, told Bill stories about how when his trenches flooded his kilt floated on top of the water, and the time he was gassed by the Germans. Bert also allowed him to play with his Black Watch badges, which you could take apart and put back together again.

When he was 14, young Bill was caught fighting in the school playground. Aware that the

boy wanted to join the army, Bill's headteacher chastised him, saying he lacked the discipline to become a good soldier. Horrified, Bill redoubled his efforts, joining the Cheshire Regiment Army Cadets as a drummer boy. The Cadet Journal, published in February 1952 after he had found fame as a national hero, recalled that Speakman was "a very keen cadet and always hankered after service in the regular Army."

Bill enlisted in the Army a few months before his 18th birthday, but this was in mid-1945, so he never got to see action during World War II. Instead, he was posted to the Rhine, Trieste, and later Berlin, protecting installations that were important to the Allies and the European reconstruction, such as ports and airfields.

Though Speakman appreciated the vital work they were doing, he hankered for action, and when the Korean War started, he volunteered. Channelling the misbehaviour that his headmaster hated, Speakman, in his own words: "made a bit of a nuisance of [himself]," going AWOL, to encourage his superiors to release him sooner.

It worked, and in July 1951, a 23-year-old Speakman landed in Korea joining Company B of 1st Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB). Speakman acted as a gofer for Major Philip St Clair Harrison, operating the radio and running messages between the men and their commanders when the lines went down.

After six years of service but no combat, Speakman arrived just in time for Operation Commando, the last big push in Korea before the war was characterised by fixed defences, trench lines and attrition. Part of an effort to establish the all-important Jamestown Line and its series of strategic hill, 1st KOSB was tasked with capturing Hill 355, also known as United Hill.



*Private Bill Speakman was the first to be awarded a Victoria Cross since Queen Elizabeth II's coronation*

**Praise for a hero**

**“As a soldier, you live by the yard-stick of your forebears and there’s no better example than Bill.”**

Major Gavin Leathall, First Battalion, the King’s Own Scottish Borderers, speaking to Manchester Evening News, 10 August 2004



Praise for a hero

**“Under the stress and strain of this battle, Private Speakman’s outstanding powers of leadership were revealed and he so dominated the situation that he inspired his comrades to stand firm and fight the enemy to a standstill”**

Private Speakman’s Victoria Cross citation

Taken in a pincer move with 1st KOSB on one side and Royal Australian Regiment forces on the other, while New Zealand gunners provided artillery support, the capture of Hill 355, and Operation Commando as a whole, was widely considered a success. However, it still took five days from 3 to 8 October of heavy fighting to seize the hill. His first taste of war, Speakman later recalled with horror seeing the burning bodies of mortar fire victims.

However, that was not the end of it. On 4 November the Chinese returned to reclaim the hill. Starting at 4am, they continuously shelled 1st KOSB soldiers. The mix of shells and mortar fire was heavy, sustained and, perhaps worst of all, deadly accurate. This clash intensified at 3.45pm, chipping away at defences and wounding men. Over the next two hours, the enemy advanced in their hundreds and attacked the battalion in waves. Forcing their way up the summit, by 5.45pm the British holding the left shoulder of the hill were fighting the People’s Republic soldiers hand-to-hand.

Over in Company B headquarters, Speakman heard over the radio that the battalion was under attack and the two NCOs that should be in charge were both wounded. Off his own initiative – and perhaps displaying that characteristic disregard for the rules his headteacher hated once again – Private Speakman enlisted six men and the only weapons they had available, a large pile of grenades, and charged the enemy. Meeting each new wave of invaders with a handful of explosives, the force and determination of

Speakman’s charges broke up each successive enemy onslaught and resulted in an ever-mounting pile of enemy dead.

Having led some ten charges through withering enemy machine gun and mortar fire, Speakman was eventually severely wounded in the leg. Undaunted by his wounds, he continued to lead charge after charge against the enemy, and it was only after a direct order from his superior officer that he agreed to pause for a first field dressing to be applied to his wounds. Having had his wounds bandaged, Private Speakman immediately rejoined his comrades and led them again and again forward in a series of grenade charges.

However, there were 600 Chinese soldiers and 1st KOSB were outnumbered ten to one. Speakman’s renegade posse could hold the Chinese at bay, but not defeat them. Worse still, they were running out of grenades, and had to resort to throwing whatever was at hand. This has led to the myth of Bill Speakman, the ‘beer bottle VC’, with newspapers claiming he and his crew were drunk fighting the Chinese and threw their beer bottles at them.

Speakman denies this was the case. Speaking to the *Manchester Evening News* in 2004, he asked: “Where would you get bottles of beer from? Whoever started the story, it seems to have caught on.” He added: “It’s true we did run out of ammunition and we were in darkness, so you pick up what you can get your hands on – fallen weapons or stones.” Perhaps a source of the confusion was a quote attributed to Speakman published in *The Canberra Times*’ coverage of his Victoria Cross ceremony. He told the newspaper’s reporter: “We hadn’t time to use the beer ration, but it was very useful, as I saw mortar crews cooling the barrels of their weapons with beer.”

Showing complete disregard for his own safety, Speakman led the remainder of his group in a final charge through an inferno of mortar and machine gun fire so that the rest of 1st KOSB could safely withdraw.

While many British veterans of the Korean War were sadly forgotten, returning to the UK without any recognition, Private Speakman was rightly honoured. After a stint in a Japanese hospital, he was given a parade by his battalion and became the first to be awarded a Victoria Cross since Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation. Returning home, he became a national hero, referred to as ‘Big Bill’ in the press. He later achieved the rank of sergeant and served in Malaysia, as well as with the SAS in Borneo and Radfan.

**02 Speakman takes charge**

With two commanding officers injured and the company being overrun by Chinese forces, Private Speakman leads six men in a series of grenade charges against the enemy. Facing wave after wave of attacks, the force and determination of Speakman’s charges repels each onslaught.



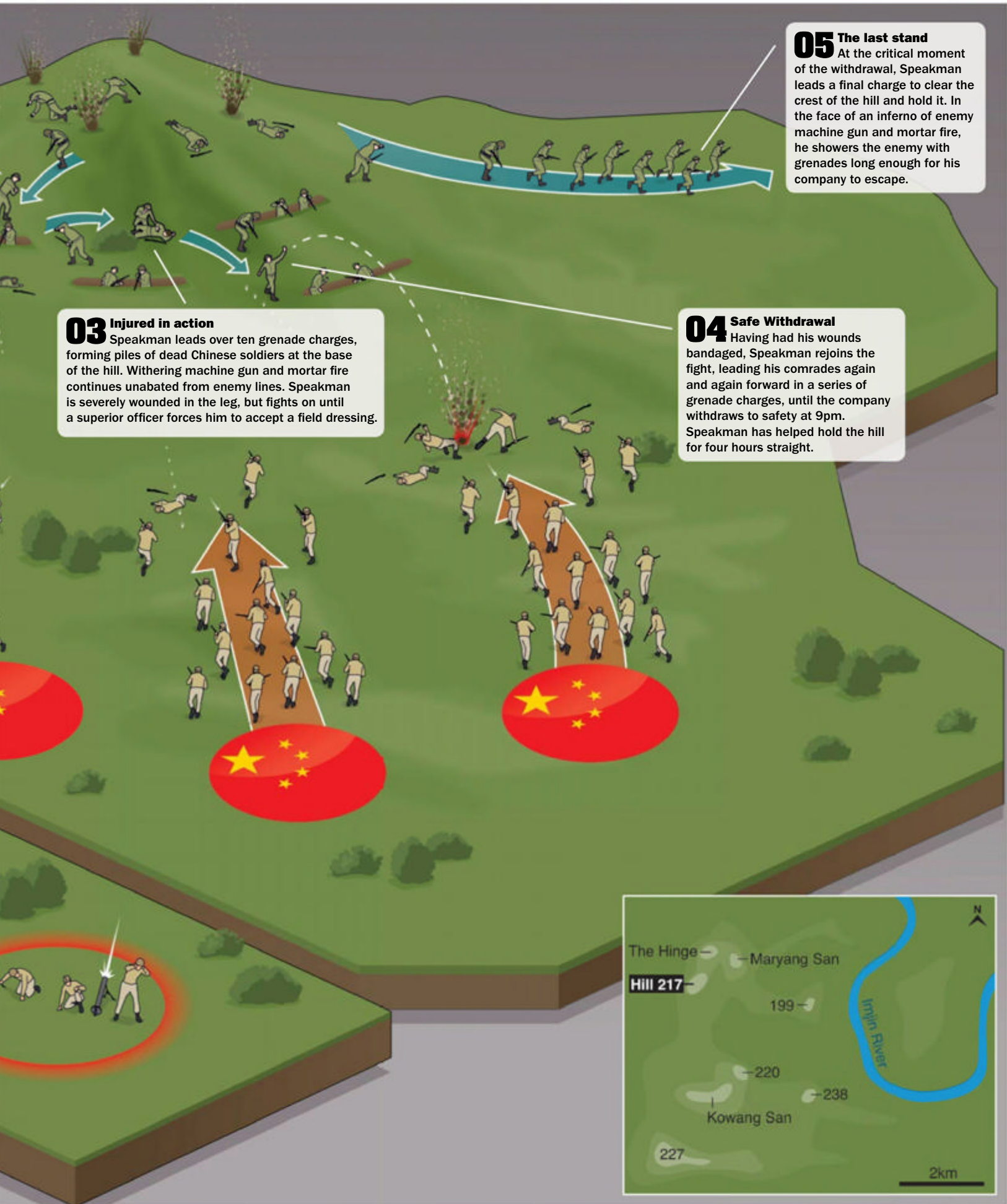
**01 Overwhelming onslaught**

At 3.45pm, 1st Battalion, The King’s Own Scottish Borderers is hit by heavy and sustained shelling and mortar fire for two hours. Considerably damaging defences and wounding a number of men, by 5.45pm the Borderers are forced to fight hand-to-hand as overwhelming Chinese forces try to take the hill.



Private Bill Speakman in March 1952, with friends on deck as they leave for Korea





**03 Injured in action** Speakman leads over ten grenade charges, forming piles of dead Chinese soldiers at the base of the hill. Withering machine gun and mortar fire continues unabated from enemy lines. Speakman is severely wounded in the leg, but fights on until a superior officer forces him to accept a field dressing.

**04 Safe Withdrawal** Having had his wounds bandaged, Speakman rejoins the fight, leading his comrades again and again forward in a series of grenade charges, until the company withdraws to safety at 9pm. Speakman has helped hold the hill for four hours straight.

**05 The last stand** At the critical moment of the withdrawal, Speakman leads a final charge to clear the crest of the hill and hold it. In the face of an inferno of enemy machine gun and mortar fire, he showers the enemy with grenades long enough for his company to escape.



Acute Graphics, Alamy



# SPAIN

WORDS WILL LAWRENCE

## THE RISE AND FALL OF A SUPERPOWER IN 10 BATTLES

From the Moorish invasions to the cruelty of the Civil War, uncover the key battles that shaped Spanish history





19 JULY 711

## THE BATTLE OF GUADALETE

THE CHRISTIAN VISIGOTHS ARE ROUTED AND MOORISH HEGEMONY BEGINS

Though the exact location of this battle remains a matter of conjecture, historians believe it unfolded near the Guadalete River in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. A Muslim force from the Umayyad Caliphate, believed to number between 7,000-10,000 and led by Tariq ibn-Ziyad, crossed from North Africa to conquer the Iberian kingdom of the Visigoths, ruled by the newly acclaimed King Roderic.

As Tariq's men landed, one chronicler claims that he burned his ships, demanding that his men conquer the Christian kingdom or else die trying. At the time, Roderic was on a campaign against the Basques in the north, though he soon began the long march southward, levying troops from his kingdom as he went. The chroniclers vastly exaggerate his numbers, claiming his force outnumbered the invaders' by ten to one. Other estimates have placed his force at around 30,000.

Whatever the truth of the matter may be, only a small portion of Roderic's troops were battle-hardened warriors and a number of sources record the ill-will with which he was regarded by some of his noblemen and their retainers. Indeed, it has been said that one of Roderic's cavalry wings deliberately stood aside, allowing Tariq's cavalry to rout the Visigoth infantry. Roderic's army was slaughtered and it is believed that the king, too, died that day. His defeat left the Iberian Peninsula at the mercy of the invaders who swept across the land and established a Moorish hegemony that would last for seven centuries.

During the decline of the Roman Empire in the West, the Iberian Peninsula yielded to the Visigoth invasions, which saw the founding of a Christian kingdom. During the reign of King Roderic in the 8th Century, however, Muslims from the Umayyad Caliphate swept across the land to establish a Moorish hegemony in the wake of their victory at The Battle of Guadalete (711). The Christian kingdoms fought back, however, and scored one of their greatest victories at The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). Once King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had laid the foundations for a united Spain in the wake of The Battle of Toro (1476), they completed the Reconquista and drove the Moors from Spain.

Under their leadership, overseas expansion began and with the crushing of the Aztecs at The Siege of Tenochtitlan (1521), the Spanish Empire in the New World took root. Affluence and influence saw Spain emerge as a European

superpower under the Habsburg dynasty, leading the Holy League against the Turks at The Battle of Lepanto (1571) before its maritime decline set in with the defeat of The Spanish Armada (1588). Spanish land forces then suffered their first major defeat in almost a century at The Battle of Rocroi (1643).

The death of Charles II saw the end of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain and the Wars of the Spanish Succession saw Philip V emerge as the peninsula's first Bourbon monarch, fighting in conflicts such as The Battle of Villaviciosa (1710). Spanish power was on the wane, however, and a loss of control in South America was confirmed following The Battle of Ayacucho (1824).

Spain fought in many European wars during the last few hundred years and the country still bears the scars of its Civil War and brutal battles, like The Ebro Offensive (1938). These ten battles, while by no means definitive, all shaped España to the country we know today.

*The Battle of Guadalete saw the Christians all but completely driven from the peninsula*





**THE CHRISTIAN ADVANCE**

"Never in Spain was there such a war," wrote the Leonese cleric Lucas de Tuy. Certainly, victory at Las Navas de Tolosa, while not decisive, greatly helped the Christian cause and broke the back of the Almohad Empire. The caliph died shortly after the battle and a minor took the throne. In the decades that followed, the Christians took the initiative and the Muslims were no longer able to launch large-scale campaigns against their enemies in the north. The victory at Las Navas de Tolosa opened up the Almohad heartland, and the knights of the military orders drove the Christian onslaught ever onwards, ensuring that Iberia would become a Christian land.

*Alfonso VIII of Castile unites the Christian kingdoms of Iberia*



## 2 THE BATTLE OF LAS NAVAS DE TOLOSA 16 JULY 1212

THE CHRISTIAN KINGDOMS OF IBERIA UNITE IN A BID TO BREAK MOORISH POWER

The might of all the Iberian kingdoms, save León, came together in a bid to topple the Muslim Almohad caliphate, which held sway over the south of the Iberian Peninsula, marching out with up to 14,000 men under the command of Alfonso VIII of Castile.

The military orders were there in numbers – Hospitallers, Templars and the Knights of both Calatrava and Santiago, the master of

the latter riding at the head of the army as its standard bearer.

The caliph, Muhammad III ibn-Yakub, is said to have had a force numbering 460,000, though modern estimates place this number closer to 30,000. His was certainly the larger army and he took up a formidable position at Las Navas de Tolosa, which could only be approached via a narrow mountain path. The caliph hoped to ambush the Christians but they forced the pass

on the night of 15 July and reached favourable ground, suitable for their heavy cavalry.

In spite of this success, the battle started badly for the Christians, whose cavalry charges were repeatedly beaten back and when the master of the Knights of Santiago was slain, Alfonso began to waiver. The military orders fared poorly, with the Templars suffering terrible slaughter, and the leader of the Calatrava cut down. The Muslim caliph is said to have directed operations from his pavilion, scimitar in one hand, Koran in the other, his tent surrounded by a bodyguard of slave warriors all chained together.

It was King Sancho VII of Navarre who saved the Christian cause, finally succeeding with a devastating cavalry charge that broke the Muslim line. Sancho's sally carried through to the caliph's tent where he cut down the legendary guard. The Almohad Caliphate never fully recovered.

**DEFINING LEADER SANCHO VII OF NAVARRE**

Sancho VII, King of Navarre, was a towering leader, physically and metaphorically. He is said to have stood at over seven feet tall, earning the sobriquet 'the strong' and his command over the Christian right wing at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa proved decisive. His men are said to have cut down the caliph's fabled chained bodyguard, hence the inclusion of the chains on the blazon of Navarre in the aftermath of the battle.





### 3 THE BATTLE OF TORO

*The struggle for the Portuguese standard*

A MILITARY STALEMATE PRECIPITATES THE BIRTH OF A UNITED SPAIN

This key engagement in the War of the Castilian Succession saw the troops of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon take on the forces mustered by Afonso V of Portugal, who hoped to extend his own dynastic rights and take control of Castile. The armies came together first at the siege of Zamora, though they met in a much bloodier engagement out in the open near the city of Toro.

Both sides are thought to have numbered up to 8,000 men, around a third of whom were cavalry. The king of Portugal led his centre, with the archbishop of Toledo on his right and his own son John, known as the Perfect Prince, controlling the arquebusiers and the cream of the cavalry on the left. Ferdinand, meanwhile, controlled his centre, in direct opposition to his rival, with the duke of Alba on his left, and six different divisions under different commanders on his right.

It was on Ferdinand's right that the battle started as the Castilians' right wing advanced against Prince John, but the Portuguese elite mounted troops were too powerful and soon routed Ferdinand's flank from the battlefield. In the meantime, Ferdinand closed with Afonso in the centre and during furious combat the Portuguese standard was ripped to shreds as men tussled to take it. It is said that the standard bearer lost both arms and held on to the ragged emblem with his teeth until he was cut down.

After three hours of fighting, Ferdinand's men finally held sway in the centre and Alba proved victorious on the right. Prince John of Portugal, however, won the day on his father's left and the battle finished with no definitive victor.

#### DEFINING LEADER

##### FERDINAND OF ARAGON

Few figures loom as large in Spanish history as Ferdinand II of Aragon. In the wake of Toro he was able to cement he and his wife Isabella's position as rulers of a confederation of kingdoms that was the institutional basis for modern Spain. He went on to conquer Granada, extinguishing the final Moorish foothold on the Iberian Peninsula, and supported Christopher Columbus' voyages of exploration across the Atlantic, which precipitated the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca empires.



#### SPAIN IS BORN

Though the Battle of Toro proved inconclusive, it was eulogised as a great victory by both sides. Ferdinand and Isabella, however, are widely seen to have won the propaganda war and it proved a political victory. Isabella claimed the throne of Castile and with Ferdinand already the heir to Aragon, he and his queen were now well placed as the rulers of a united Spain. The conflict with Afonso V and Portugal continued until the peace Treaty of Alcáçovas a little over three years later, which granted Portugal enormous maritime rights and a cash settlement. Isabella was recognised as the uncontested Queen of Castile, though she renounced any claim to the throne of Portugal.

## 4 THE SIEGE OF TENOCHTITLAN

SIEGE, SACRIFICE AND SLAUGHTER BRING MEXICO INTO THE FOLD

The fight for Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City), which sat upon the lake of Texcoco, saw the conquistador Hernán Cortés bid to topple the main bastion of the Aztec Empire. It was a long and brutal affair. When he launched his assault on the city, Cortés commanded 86 cavalry, 118 crossbowmen and musketeers, and around 700 infantry armed with swords and pikes. He'd also built up a large force of Tlaxcalans, denizens of a nearby warrior state who had never submitted to Aztec control. He had also built 13 small ships, or brigantines, with which he soon took control of the lake.

The assault on the city began with the severing of the city's fresh water supply before the Spaniards and their allies launched their land attack along the three causeways that ran across the lake to the city. At the same time, Cortés' brigantines sailed against the canoes trying to bring fresh supplies into the city. On this first day, they captured the great temple-pyramid but were unable to hold it and were pushed back. This back and forth continued for months, and whenever Spaniards were captured, they were sacrificed to the Aztec gods in a grisly spectacle clearly audible from their camp.

Eventually, though, starvation and pestilence took their toll on the defenders, and on 13 August a number of canoes made a bid for freedom. One conspicuous vessel was captured and was found to contain the Aztec chief, Guatemoc (heir to the mighty Montezuma who had perished in the previous year). With Guatemoc's capture the siege was over and Cortés either ordered, or allowed, the evacuation of the city. The jewel of the Aztec Empire, though greatly diminished by war, was now in Spanish hands.

#### DEFINING LEADER

##### HERNÁN CORTÉS

Hernán Cortés was born in 1485 in Medellín, western Spain, and though initially a student of law he left to make his fortune in the Americas. In 1504 he sailed to the Dominican Republic before aiding Diego Velázquez in his conquest of Cuba. It was here he founded his reputation for courage and daring, attracting his band of adventurers who would conquer the Aztec Empire.



#### A NEW EMPIRE RISES

With the taking of Tenochtitlan, Hernán Cortés and a few courageous followers had overthrown a mighty empire and the rulers of the surrounding regions – not only those who were tributaries of the Aztecs – paid their respects. Where these were not forthcoming, Cortés turned to military force as against the unruly region of Panuco, to whom he soon marched, burning 400 of their chiefs in public. In 1523 Cortés was named governor and captain general of New Spain and his great successes inspired the likes of Francisco Pizarro in Peru, who conquered the Incas, and marked the way for the claiming of a continent.



*Hernán Cortés besieges the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan*





The Battle of Lepanto saw European, and so Spanish dominance in the Mediterranean

# 5 THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO

## 7 OCTOBER 1571

### THE HOLY LEAGUE REPELS THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN A MEDITERRANEAN BLOOD BATH

Widely touted as the last maritime engagement fought in the Mediterranean between galleys, Lepanto saw a coalition of Catholic maritime powers take on the Ottoman Empire, which was thought to possess the greatest navy in the world. The battle was precipitated by Sultan Selim II's invasion of Cyprus in 1570, forcing the Venetians into an alliance with Pope Pius V and Philip II of Spain. The latter sent his half brother, Don John of Austria, at the head of an allied fleet of more than 200 galleys to intercept the Turks in the Gulf of Patras, near Lepanto (Návpaktos), Greece.

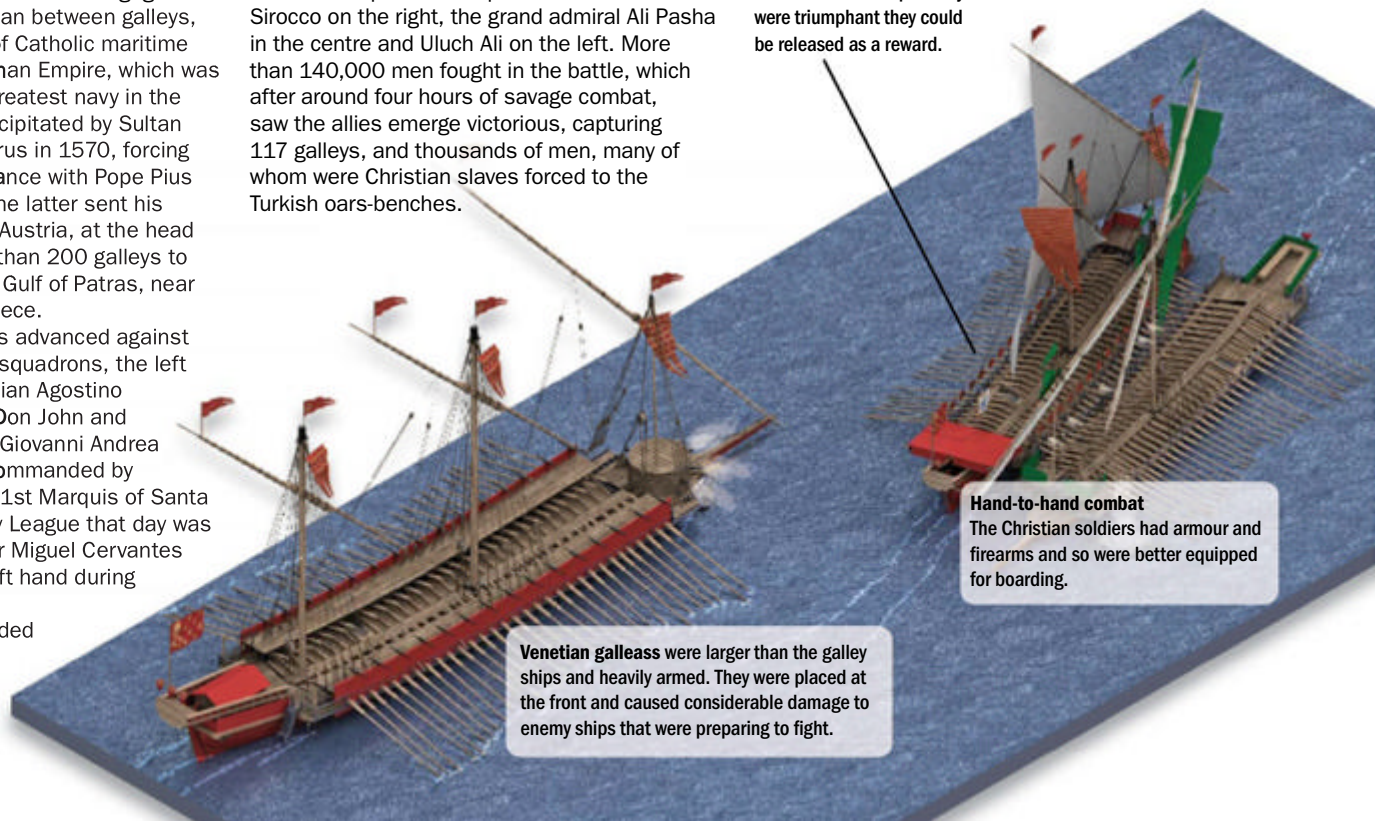
The Holy League galleys advanced against the Ottoman fleet in four squadrons, the left commanded by the Venetian Agostino Barbarigo, the centre by Don John and the right by the Genoese Giovanni Andrea Doria. The reserve was commanded by Spain's Álvaro de Bazán, 1st Marquis of Santa Cruz. Fighting for the Holy League that day was future *Don Quixote* author Miguel Cervantes who lost the use of his left hand during the battle.

The Ottoman fleet included more than 250 ships and

was drawn up in three squadrons with Mehmed Sirocco on the right, the grand admiral Ali Pasha in the centre and Uluch Ali on the left. More than 140,000 men fought in the battle, which after around four hours of savage combat, saw the allies emerge victorious, capturing 117 galleys, and thousands of men, many of whom were Christian slaves forced to the Turkish oars-benches.



Oarsmen were usually slaves or convicts and were shackled to the ship. If they were triumphant they could be released as a reward.



**Hand-to-hand combat**  
The Christian soldiers had armour and firearms and so were better equipped for boarding.

**Venetian galleass** were larger than the galley ships and heavily armed. They were placed at the front and caused considerable damage to enemy ships that were preparing to fight.



# THE TURKS DEFEATED

## LEPANTO ENSURES SPAIN'S POSITION AS THE MEDITERRANEAN'S PRE-EMINENT CATHOLIC SUPERPOWER

Though sometimes regarded as of limited strategic importance, with Venice surrendering Cyprus to the Turks two years later, the Battle of Lepanto gave European morale an almighty boost and severely damaged the 'invincible' reputation of the Ottoman navy, which had not lost a notable battle since the previous century. Cervantes described Lepanto as, "The highest and most memorable occasion that past and future centuries will ever hope to see",

while the great painters Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese all committed the battle to canvas. The victory cemented Spain's position as the Mediterranean's pre-eminent Catholic superpower.

The battle of the galley ships began with artillery to weaken enemy ships, and then it was customary for ships to attack in an attempt to board, and fight hand-to-hand.

Firepower was concentrated on the bow of the ship.

Sailing upwind used up the energy of oarsmen and speeds were reduced, but manoeuvrability at short distance was improved.

Sailing downwind allowed ships to reach greater speeds, but reduced manoeuvrability in battle.

Wind direction

# THE BATTLE

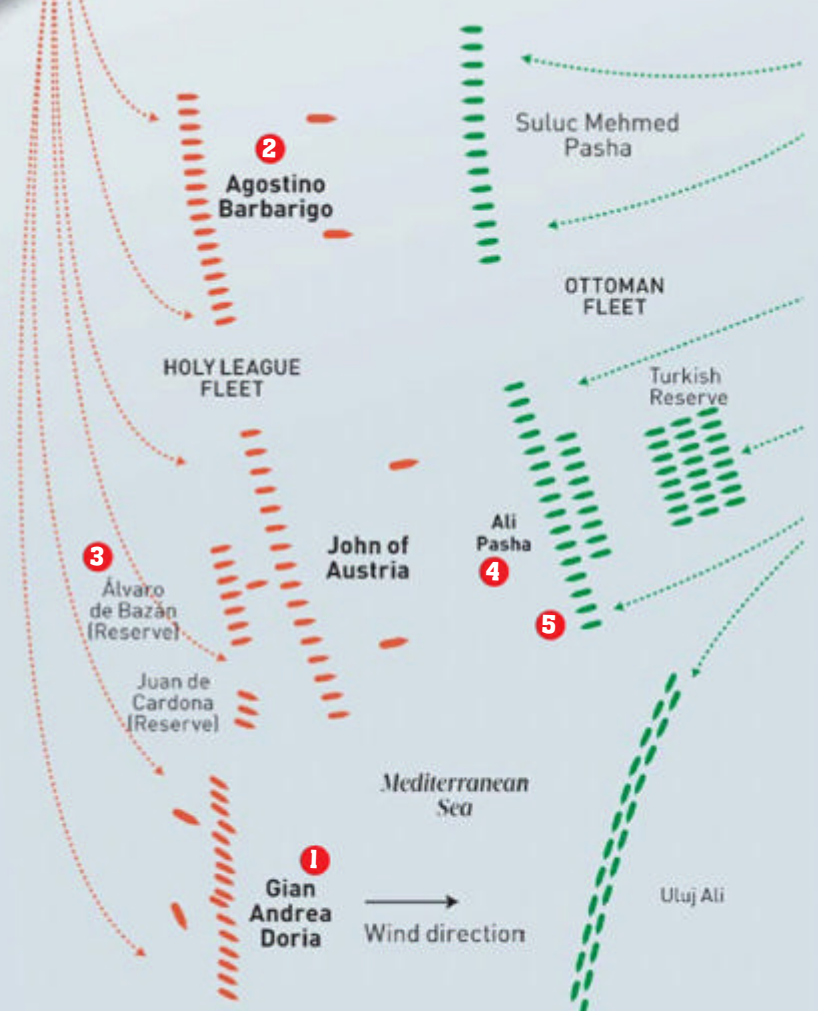
**01 Fighting in the south**  
As the fleets draw near, Doria thinks that the Turkish right outflanks his own and sails his contingent further south. Ali, meanwhile, sees the gap open up in the Holy League lines and bids to break through. Doria responds and the galleys engage.

**02 The northern front**  
To the north, Sirocco turns the Holy League's left flank and an arrow kills their commander, Barbarigo. The return of a galleass – a large merchant ship transformed into a warship – helps rally the Venetian line, which holds off the Turks.

**03 Santa Cruz weighs in**  
With fierce fighting in the centre and to the south, the Christian reserve under the Marquis of Santa Cruz, Álvaro de Bazán, enters the fray and Ali is forced to flee with a sizeable portion of the Turkish fleet.

**04 Death of Ali Pasha**  
The two flagships find each other and a struggle begins between John's 'Real' and Pasha's 'Sultana'. The Spanish troops are twice repulsed but reinforcements from other vessels, including Álvaro de Bazán's galley, turn the tide. Contrary to John's wishes, Ali Pasha is beheaded and his head displayed on a pike.

**05 The Ottomans are defeated**  
Seeing their commander's head on a pike has a crushing impact on Ottoman morale in the centre and the battle turns against them. Some Turkish soldiers keep fighting and it is said that when their missiles run out, they begin throwing fruit at their Christian rivals.





## 6 THE SPANISH ARMADA

A FAILED INVASION OF ENGLAND MARKS A TURNING POINT IN SPANISH IMPERIAL AMBITION

MAY – JULY 1588

With tensions between Spain and England at boiling point, King Phillip II sent his mighty armada to invade his protestant foe. It was an armada of 130 ships rounding Brittany and sailing into the English channel on 19 July, the day when the English first sighted their Spanish adversaries and when the fleet captains supposedly finished their game of bowls before boarding their vessels. The Spanish ships were predominantly heavy galleys, designed for close quarter action and the launching of boarding parties, while the English ships were lighter vessels armed with longer-range cannons.

Under Moon-bright skies the fleets engaged and the English guns gave them the advantage, though this was not pressed home and the Spanish sailed towards the Isle of Wight in a bid to establish a command base. Constant English harassment, however, forced the Spaniards onwards and they headed towards Calais where they hoped to receive reinforcements. It was here the English launched a cunning manoeuvre, setting eight of their own ships alight on 29 July and letting the wind carry them into the midst of the Spanish fleet. Though no vessels were damaged directly by the firestorm, many Spanish ships collided with one another and the fleet lost its shape.

Unable to receive reinforcements and low on ammunition, the Spaniards headed for home round the north of Scotland, where the weather caused terrible damage. Fewer than half of the original fleet made it home, while the English lost not a single vessel. The failure of Philip's armada ceded naval supremacy to the English and signalled the beginning of Spain's decline as a major maritime power.

## 7 THE BATTLE OF ROCROI

DEFEAT FOR THE HABSBURG EMPIRE DISPELS THE MYTH OF SPANISH INVINCIBILITY

With the bloody Thirty Years' War – the great Franco-Habsburg struggle for European supremacy – moving towards its end point, a 27,000-strong Spanish army led by General Francisco de Melo invaded northern France and laid siege to the small fortress of Rocroi, north of Reims. The French moved quickly before the Spaniards could be reinforced, sending forth a force of 23,000 under the command of the Duc de d'Enghien. The Spanish army, comprising battalions from German and Italian allies, fought in its traditional square formation, the tercio, which had hitherto dominated the European battlefield.

Initially, the Spaniards gained the upper hand, their German cavalry on the right flank routing the opposing French horsemen, while the mighty tercios pushed hard against the French

centre. On the left, however, d'Enghien enjoyed more success, battering the Spanish cavalry and sending them fleeing from the field while closing in on the rear of the Spanish centre and dissipating the German and Italian infantry. The elite Spanish tercios were left to continue the fight alone and though they repulsed at least four French cavalry charges, a constant bombardment from French artillery finally forced their capitulation.

Such was their bravery, it is reported that, much like a defeated siege garrison, the Spanish were permitted to depart the field with their colours and weapons intact. Rocroi proved a turning point, however, marking the first defeat suffered by a Spanish force on the battlefield in almost a century and signalling the beginning of the end for the previously indefatigable tercio.



19 MAY 1643



## 8 THE BATTLE OF VILLAVICIOSA

### PHILIP V EMERGES AS SPAIN'S FIRST BOURBON MONARCH

The Wars of the Spanish Succession saw a European alliance win a series of great victories over France's Louis XIV, including Blenheim and Malplaquet, limiting his ambitions for a Bourbon Empire that would replace the Habsburgs as Europe's major superpower. The one region that the allies faltered was in Spain itself, where

Louis had proclaimed his grandson (and the named successor of Charles II, Spain's last Habsburg monarch) as King Philip V.

Philip's position was solidified in the peninsula following the Battle of Villaviciosa where his 20,000-strong force engaged an army of around 14,000, which battled for

Habsburg Spain and the allied forces of Britain, Austria, Portugal and the Dutch Republic. Philip himself fought on his right wing, emerging victorious over the allied left, which was cut to pieces. Though the Bourbon centre floundered, the Bourbon left – led by the Count of Aguilar's celebrated cavalry and dragoons – fought furiously and scored a number of successes.

Though no obvious victor emerged to take control of the battlefield, the allies' retreat is widely perceived to have cemented Philip's control over Spain where he reigned as the first Bourbon monarch. However, the treaties signed during the Peace of Utrecht (1713-1714) severely hampered Spanish power in favour of Britain, though Philip V fought hard to re-establish Spanish pre-eminence.

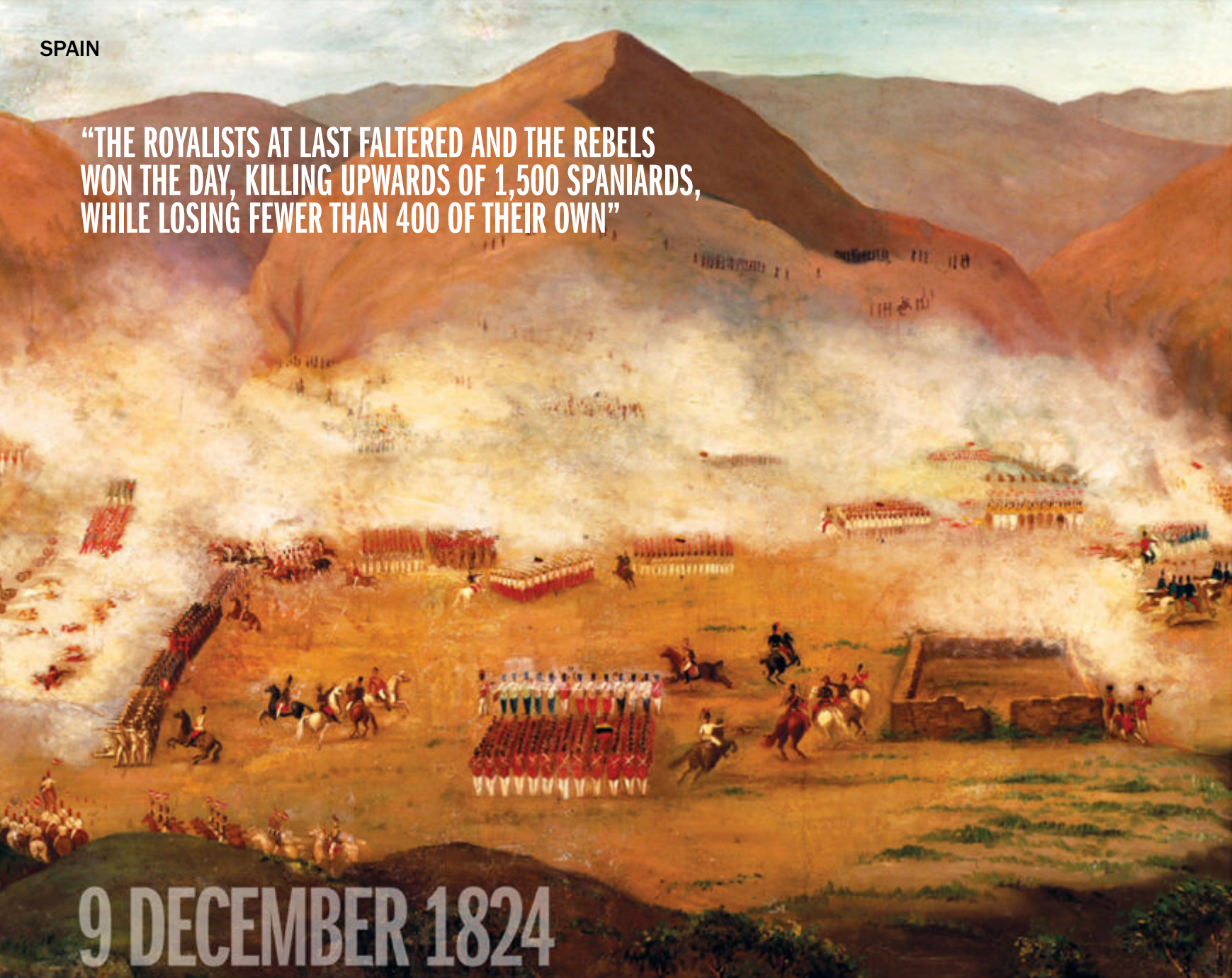
**“PHILIP HIMSELF FOUGHT ON HIS RIGHT WING, EMERGING VICTORIOUS OVER THE ALLIED LEFT, WHICH WAS CUT TO PIECES”**



*The Duke of Vendôme (left) presents the standards to Philip V of Spain*



“THE ROYALISTS AT LAST FALTERED AND THE REBELS WON THE DAY, KILLING UPWARDS OF 1,500 SPANIARDS, WHILE LOSING FEWER THAN 400 OF THEIR OWN”



# 9 DECEMBER 1824

## 9 THE BATTLE OF AYACUCHO

A HIGH-ALTITUDE SCRAP MARKS THE END OF AN EMPIRE

The battle of Ayacucho was fought on a narrow plateau high in the Andes mountains, as the separatist forces of Simón Bolívar battled for Latin America's independence from Spain.

Though there is much debate about the size of the armies at Ayacucho, many historians believe that the Peruvian revolutionary forces stood at around 6,000. They were comprised of men from all across the continent, and were led by Bolívar's lieutenant, Antonio José de Sucre. The royalists, meanwhile, might have numbered in the region of 9,000 men (though many of these were unmotivated conscripts) and boasted a much stronger artillery contingent.

The royalists took the initiative on the western flank with their superior firepower, though Sucre bolstered that wing with members of his reserve before he was able to strike a decisive blow. The Spanish general, Canterac, ordered his centre to move down the hill to engage, and the rocky ground saw them break formation and extend their line.

Sucre then ordered his cavalry, commanded by the English mercenary William Miller, to charge the disorganised Spaniards while his

### THE END OF EMPIRE

The Spanish had been losing control in the continent since 1819 and had King Ferdinand VII made concessions he may have stemmed the Wars for Independence, but he wanted to reassert his rights over the continent after his restoration. The rebels won a series of victories leading up to Ayacucho, which destroyed the last remaining organised Spanish force in South America. The battle precipitated the birth of an independent Peru and paved the way for the founding of Bolivia. Vitaly, defeat at Ayacucho brought about the end of Spanish colonial rule in South America.

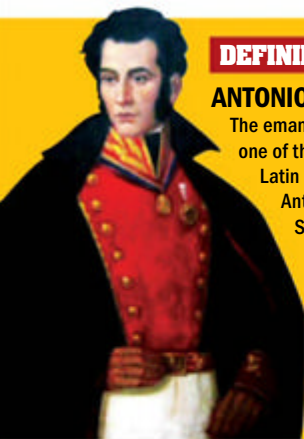


Simón Bolívar led the rebels in the War of Independence

### DEFINING LEADER

#### ANTONIO JOSÉ DE SUCRE

The emancipator of Peru and Ecuador, and one of the most respected leaders of the Latin American wars for independence, Antonio José de Sucre served as Simón Bolívar's chief lieutenant and fought in great victories at the Pichincha (May, 1822), Junín (August 1824) and then the decisive Ayacucho. He went on to become the first constitutionally elected leader of Bolivia.



infantry on the right flank redoubled their efforts against the wavering Spanish left. The royalists at last faltered and the rebels won the day, killing upwards of 1,500 Spaniards, while losing fewer than 400 of their own.



# 10 THE EBRO OFFENSIVE

THE LARGEST BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR SEES THE EXTINCTION OF REPUBLICAN HOPES

In the summer of 1938, the Republican cause was stuttering in the face of General Franco's Nationalist onslaught, which was edging towards Valencia and Madrid. In a bid to stem the Nationalist advance, the Republicans launched a surprise offensive across the River Ebro with around 80,000 troops, including several international brigades, such as the British Battalion.

Catching the Nationalists off guard, the Republicans enjoyed early success, battering Franco's 50th Division of the Moroccan Army, and moving towards the strategically important town of Gandesa. Franco responded, however, by mobilising major reinforcements from across Spain. He enjoyed air support from the German Condor Legion, whose bombers stymied Republican supply efforts by destroying bridges and roads.

A war of attrition ensued, with Franco's airforce and superior artillery and tank forces halting the Republican advance and pinning them down. Foolishly, the under-supplied and weaker-armed Republicans elected to hold their ground, suffering terrible casualties that their inferior resources could not sustain. Threatening to shoot any troops who sought to withdraw, the Republicans grimly hung on and saw their army gradually obliterated.

Franco then ordered a series of counter-offensives during August, while in late September the League of Nations in Geneva announced that the International Brigades would be withdrawn from Spain. This was a major boost for Franco, whose troops eventually forced the Republicans back across the Ebro. By 18 November, the battle was over. The Republican forces were exhausted and the Nationalists were once again in command of the Ebro region, leaving Catalonia vulnerable to Franco's final assault.

## THE NATIONALISTS TRIUMPHANT

Though both sides suffered enormous casualties – with some estimates placing the number at well over 100,000 men – the weaker Republican forces could not replenish their material or manpower losses (reckoned by some historians at up to 30,000 dead), while the Nationalists were rearmed by the German government and were able to launch their decisive offensive against Catalonia. The battle for the Ebro did perhaps extend the war, but the expenditure in lives and munitions ultimately cost the Republicans dearly. By the spring of 1939, Madrid fell to the Nationalists, ushering in Franco's 36-year dictatorship.

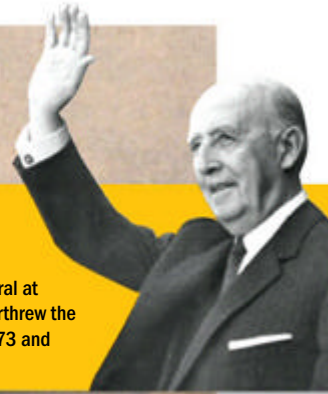
*Poble Vell de Corbera d'Ebre – a town completely destroyed during the war*



## DEFINING LEADER

### FRANCISCO FRANCO

Francisco Franco enjoyed a remarkable military career, rising to the rank of Brigadier-General at the age of just 33. Eventually, he took over the leadership of the Nationalist forces that overthrew the Spanish democratic republic in the Civil War (1936–39), ruling Spain as a dictator until 1973 and remaining head of state until his death in 1975. His rule still divides opinion today.



25 JULY – 16 NOVEMBER 1938



Images: Alamy, FreeVectorMaps.com, Getty, So/90



PLA fighters  
in the Maoist  
base areas







## BRIEFING

# The Nepalese Civil War

The massacres, widespread rebellion and Maoist-inspired guerilla warfare that ravaged Nepal for over a decade

WORDS TOM FARRELL

The young men and women on the mountain sides, kitted out in combat fatigues, fists clenched and raised in communist-style salutes, looked like strange throwbacks. In the early years of the 21st Century, the sickle-and-hammer flag seemed as obsolete as the cross of the Knights Templar. During the previous century, what had once been called 'real existing socialism' had coloured a third of the globe in Marxist-Leninist red. But within a remarkably short period, this ideology's influence had drained out of the global map, surviving only in attenuated forms in such states as Cuba or North Korea.

The Nepalese radicals called themselves Maoists – that seemed even stranger. Maoism, as a serious ideological force, had essentially died with Chairman Mao Zedong in September 1976. The Communist Party of China still held power, but Mao's successors had avoided the fate of their Soviet counterparts by adapting to a world of globalised capital. Chinese cities like Guangzhou and Shanghai were now powerhouses of commerce, turning out every cheap consumer item imaginable. Maoist China, impoverished and isolated, seemed as distant as the Ming emperors.

But the 'People's War' fought by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) between 1996 and 2006 was not the historical anomaly it appeared to be.

Many of the tourists who flocked to Nepal, the 'roof of the world', viewed the country as an exotic playground. Nestling under the white peaks of the Himalayas, the capital of Kathmandu was a curious amalgam of the medieval and modern. Its brick-walled streets gave way to Hindu bathing pools and temples, places of flickering candles and statues of multi-armed gods. Kathmandu was also a place

of budget hotels, internet cafes and travel agents offering the chance to trek into the mountains or kayak through surging rivers.

Westerners romanticised Nepal. It was the land that drew adventurers like Sir Edmund Hillary, conqueror of Mount Everest, formed part of the hippie trail during the 1960s and more recently, was associated with the controversy over veteran Gurkha soldiers being allowed residency rights in Britain.

But another Nepal existed, replete with some of Asia's worst poverty and chronic underdevelopment. In some regions of countryside, young adults were virtually nonexistent, their relatives dependent on the remittances they sent from menial jobs in India and the Middle East. Outside of the towns,



### THE EVENTS OF NEPAL'S MAOIST REBELLION

**1768-92**

Prithvi Narayan Shah conquers Kathmandu and establishes the foundation for a united kingdom. Nepalese expansion is later halted by the Chinese in Tibet.

**1814-16**

The Anglo-Nepalese War culminates in the establishment of current borders. Nepalese Gurkha soldiers begin serving in the British army.

**1846**

The Kot massacre in Kathmandu forces the Shah dynasty from power. The isolationist Rana dynasty will rule until 1951.

**1923**

Nepal changes from a British protectorate to an independent kingdom. India exerts a major political and commercial influence after 1947.



three quarters of women were illiterate. Caste divisions, thousands of years old, were still enforced. In some areas, landlords exercised near feudal power.

Nepal was and remains an ethnic jigsaw. The Mongoloid groups of the uplands such as the Magar, Tharu and Thamang grappled with discrimination and marginalisation as did the Madhesi people of the subtropical lowlands. This was fertile ground for an armed insurgency that vowed to establish a communist republic where inequality and poverty would fade away.

Nepal's civil war killed about 18,000 people and displaced tens of thousands more. It was the first openly 'communist' rebellion since the end of the Cold War and it proved remarkably successful. Unlike Cold War guerrilla groups, Nepal's Maoists did not benefit from superpower largesse. Unlike ethno-nationalist groups, they did not, to any significant extent, finance their war effort from the donations of wealthy and sympathetic expatriates. Unlike more-recent Islamist groups, the Maoists – despite their rhetoric to the contrary – never

really affirmed to a global narrative of conflict, able to source weapons and recruits from a myriad of nations.

Yet within weeks of the Nepalese government and the Maoists signing a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006, their leaders had entered parliament. By May 2008 Nepal had become a republic. Between August 2008 and May 2009 a coalition government reigned with the Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as Prachanda (the Fierce One), serving as the country's prime minister.

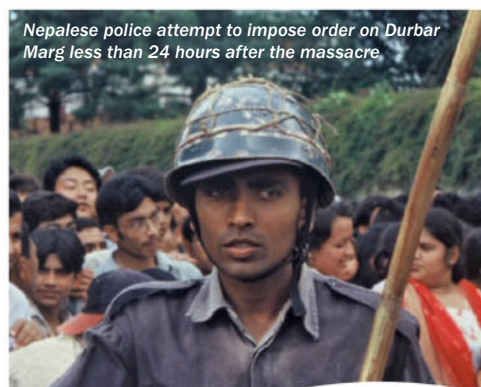
The Maoists then went into opposition but by August 2011 Prachanda's deputy Dr Baburam Bhattarai had taken up the prime ministerial role. But an impasse persisted over the drafting of a new constitution.

The Maoists seek to codify a radical transformation of Nepalese society. But in November 2013 they were dealt a crushing electoral defeat. Today, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is in crisis, relegated to third place in parliament.

Moreover, in June 2012, a hard-line faction calling itself the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) broke from the leadership, accusing Prachanda and Bhattarai of betraying the principles of the Peoples' War. Led by the senior ideologue Mohan Baidya, aka Kiran, this breakaway group remains committed to revolution. Should they return to armed insurgency at some point in the future, it will be proof of how much Nepalese history seems caught in repeating cycles.

### Democracy and disillusionment

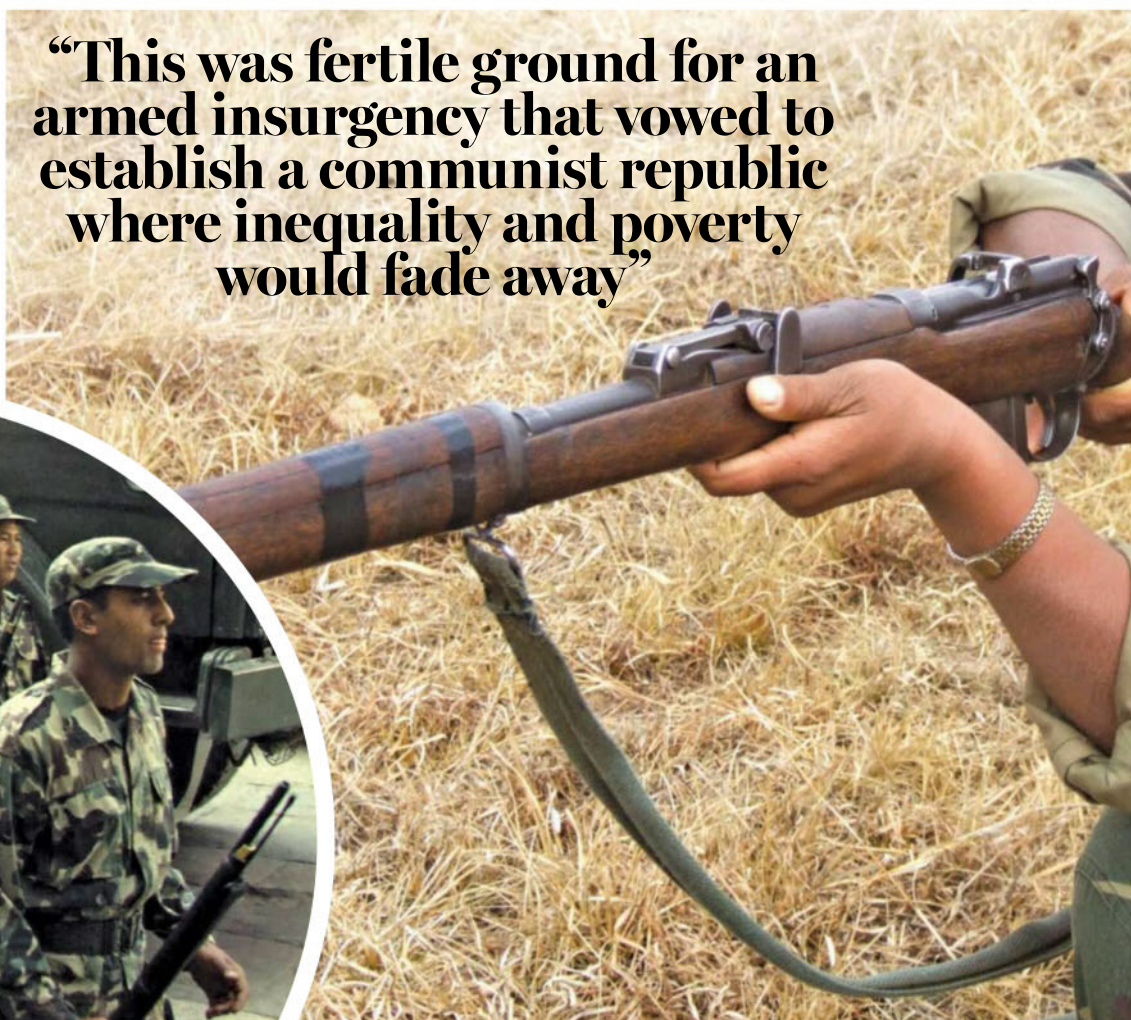
More than 20 years ago, the original generation of Maoists were radicalised in similar circumstances – amid ideological factionalism and deep disillusionment with parliamentary democracy. Comrade Prachanda himself had grown up on the southern lowlands, not far from the reputed birthplace of Prince Siddhartha Gautama. In the 6th Century BCE, Siddhartha was credited with achieving nirvana (enlightenment), escaping the great cycle of life, death and reincarnation, becoming the Buddha.



Nepalese police attempt to impose order on Durbar Marg less than 24 hours after the massacre.



RNA soldiers on patrol in Kathmandu in March 2006



**“This was fertile ground for an armed insurgency that vowed to establish a communist republic where inequality and poverty would fade away”**

#### 1959-60

King Mahendra Shah seizes control and suspends parliament following a democratic interlude. A new constitution establishes a system of non-party councils called 'panchayat'.



#### February 1990

A pro-democracy movement orchestrated by the Nepali Congress and other leftist parties leads to mass demonstrations. King Birendra Shah relents and agrees to a new democratic constitution.



#### Feb 1996

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) begins its People's War with isolated attacks around the country. Initially they have few supporters or guns.

#### 1 June 2001

The apparently intoxicated Crown Prince Dipendra shoots dead most of the royal family in the Kathmandu palace. The unpopular hardliner Gyanendra Shah becomes monarch.

#### November 2001

A state of emergency is declared and the Royal Nepal Army is deployed against the Maoists for the first time. Maoist attacks become deadlier.



Although they would probably have balked at the comparison, the Maoists also sought to break with a cycle, one of expectation, compromise and betrayal.

The true heartland of Nepalese Maoism was further west, in the mountainous districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot and Salyan. This area, impoverished and inhabited by low-caste minorities, was a stronghold of the historic Communist Party of Nepal, founded in India in 1949.

It was also an area that had seen little benefit from a democratic interlude in the 1950s, when the Nepali Congress held power. After King Mahendra Shah seized control in 1960, parliamentary democracy was suspended in favour of a system of councils called 'panchayat'. Three decades passed before popular protests in Kathmandu and other cities forced his more liberal son Birendra to restore elections and agree to a new constitution during 1990-1991.

But once again the ethnic minorities were disappointed – the new constitution

## “Attacks on isolated police posts in the countryside allowed the Maoists to accumulate explosives and rifles”

did little to advance their rights. The Nepali Congress returned to power in the first of a series of short-lived, fractious and often seemingly corrupt governments.

One political group that did claim to take ethnic and caste emancipation seriously was the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre). In the heady days of the 1990 People's Movement, it had formed out of the merger of several small, leftist groups. Among them was the Communist of Nepal-Mashal (meaning flame), whose rising was thanks to a former student leader named Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

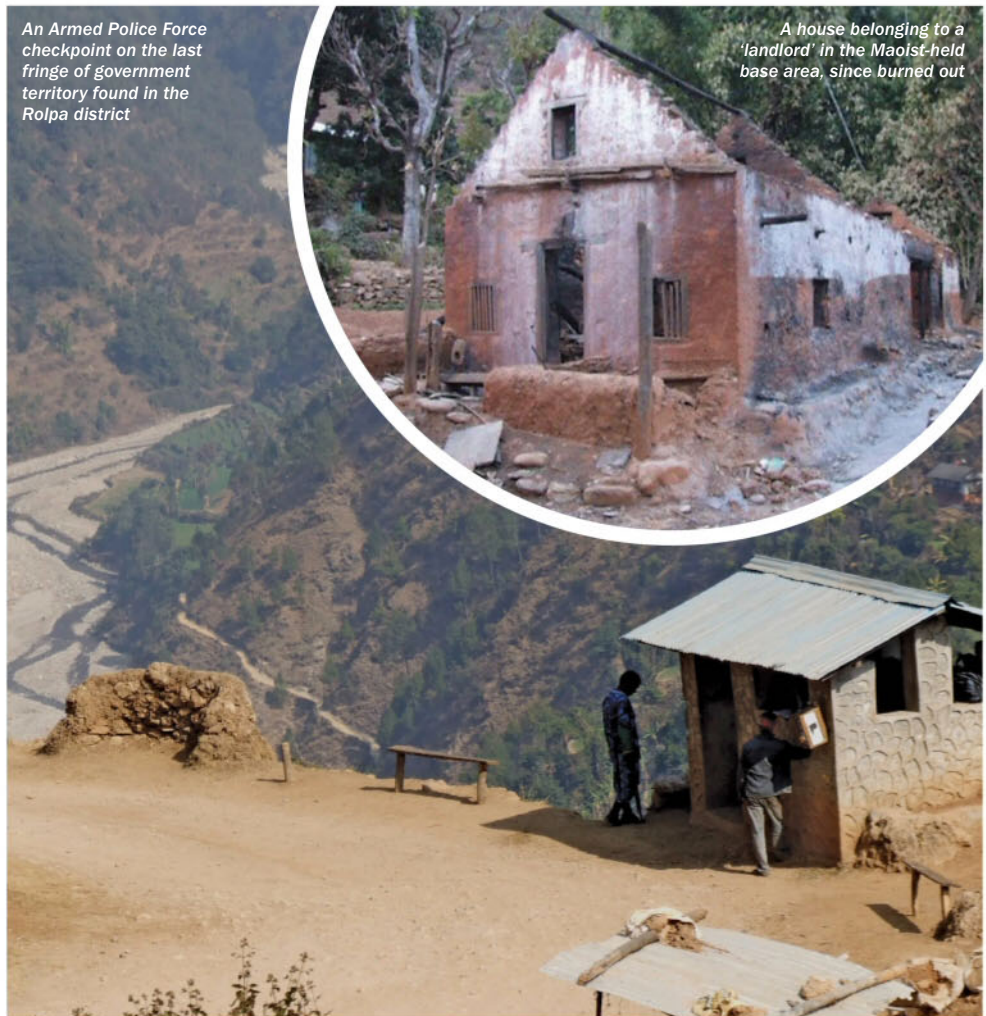
Like many a revolutionary before him, he had come from a background of relative privilege. Born into the elite Brahmin caste of Hinduism,

he had graduated from an agricultural college in the mid-1970s and was part of a growing generation of Nepalese youth disillusioned by the culture of the panchayat era and unwilling to spend their adult lives labouring in India or the Middle East.

By 1994 he formed an alliance with another lower middle-class radical called Dr Baburam Bhattarai. In February 1996, Bhattarai presented the Congress-led government with a list of 40 demands, threatening civil war if they were not met. This was when Pushpa Kamal Dahal became Prachanda. The CPN (Unity Centre) split and yet another faction emerged – the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).



A young PLA fighter



An Armed Police Force checkpoint on the last fringe of government territory found in the Rolpa district

A house belonging to a 'landlord' in the Maoist-held base area, since burned out

### August 2003

A seven-month ceasefire ends between the government and Maoists.

A Maoist-inspired general strike shuts Nepal down for several days the next month.

### 1 February 2005

King Gyanendra stages a royal coup, suspending government and appointing his own ten-member cabinet. India and the West suspend military aid.

### 5 November 2005

The seven main opposition parties meet the Maoist leadership in India and work out an alliance aimed at removing Gyanendra.

### 8 November 2006

After the largest protests since 1990, Parliament is reconvened for the first time in four years. Prime Minister G P Koirala, aged 84, urges peace talks to end the civil war.



### 28 November 2006

The Maoists declare an end to the People's War. An estimated 18,000 Nepalese have died in ten years.

### 15 January 2007

Parliament is dissolved and replaced by an interim government that includes the Maoists. The armed wing begins formally handing over weapons to UN monitors.



## Escalating conflict

At first the People's War seemed unlikely to register as anything more than a footnote in the nation's history. In February 1996 the first attacks began, usually involving the torching of money lenders' houses or Indian-owned businesses. But attacks on isolated police posts in the countryside allowed the Maoists to accumulate explosives and rifles, mostly .22 and 12 varieties. Within a few years they had also become proficient in the manufacture of booby traps, pipe bombs and nail-filled grenades too.

The training for this was believed to have come from Indian Maoist groups, particularly those based in Bihar state. The endemic poverty in that region of India had spawned an insurgency by a group known as the Naxalites in 1967-1971. Even today a revived Maoist movement is active in numerous Indian states.

At the outset of the insurgency, the Nepalese government had tasked the police with containing the Maoists. Nepal, however, had never faced a prolonged civil war before. The police, lacking proper air support and intelligence, often drove rural civilians towards the Maoists through their heavy-handed tactics. During 1998, a police operation codenamed Kilo Sierra, intended to flush the Maoists out of 18 western districts, killed 500 people and displaced thousands more. Camps for the internally displaced began to materialise around the lowland towns and cities.

The Maoists were inspired by the communist guerrillas of the 1927-1949 civil war in China, so they compensated for light weaponry by launching deadly 'human wave' attacks on vulnerable targets, usually at night. A remote police station in the mountains would be attacked by dozens of fighters. Police who did not surrender immediately were killed. By the end of the decade, the guerrillas, known locally as Maobadi, had captured hundreds of .303 rifles this way.

Politically, the Maoists were run by a standing committee of the politbureau, a politbureau with alternative members and, below them, a central committee with 50-60 members. The elusive Chairman Prachanda seldom gave interviews. But in the villages of Nepal's mountainous west, his features were increasingly appearing on posters and propaganda banners next to the historic stalwarts of revolution – Marx, Lenin and Mao.

**“The police, lacking proper air support and intelligence, often drove rural civilians towards the Maoists through their heavy-handed tactics”**

## LIFE IN A LIBERATED ZONE

Generations before, Chairman Mao had laid out a blueprint for the People's War in three phases. In the first phase, a guerrilla force launches hit-and-run attacks on government targets, gradually constructing a parallel state structure in rural 'base' areas. In the second phase, equilibrium is reached with the security forces pushed back to a defensive position. In the third phase, a mass uprising takes place in the cities.

In much of rural Nepal, the Maoists frequently did not replace existing government structures so much as build them from scratch. Neglected by successive governments,

the infrastructure was woefully inadequate in most rural districts.

Mass mobilisation of the peasantry was a central tenet of Mao's theories. His Nepalese heirs applied this with particular vigour during the building of the Martyrs' Highway, a 91-kilometre long road snaking through the western mountains. It started in November 2004, and at one point at least 8,000 villagers were engaged in construction duties at any one time.

Certainly at least some labourers included people who had fallen foul of the 'people's courts' established in the base areas, with a criminal code drawn up by the politbureau and

central committee. But the Maoists were shrewd enough to enact populist measures too. Early on, tillers rights were established and old debts to landlords written off.

At least one battalion of the PLA was assigned labour duties to emphasise their 'proletarian' nature. Although the Maoists taxed the peasantry, they also set up co-operative shops where goods could be bought at discounted prices. Little leeway was shown to members of the land-owning 'comprador class' or teachers who objected to the curriculum of Maoist-run schools. Both were harassed and ultimately expelled from the base areas.



Work on the Martyrs' Highway through the base areas of western Nepal

## Massacre at the palace

The year 2001 proved a pivotal one in the People's War. In January the Armed Police Force was formed as a police paramilitary wing. Maoist attacks grew more audacious in the countryside and by November, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deyba declared a state of emergency, sending the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) to quell the insurgency.

One of the goals of the Maoists was the abolition of the monarchy. King Birendra, however, was relatively liberal and commanded much popular support among the masses. His

brother Prince Gyanendra, an opponent of the 1990 People's Movement, advocated a much tougher line against the Maoists, but he was considered a marginal figure.

All that changed on the night of 1 June, when the royal family gathered at Kathmandu's Narayanhiti Palace. Smarting from an argument with his relatives over his choice of future bride, Crown Prince Dipendra, apparently stoned on a mixture of Famous Grouse whisky and opium-laced cigarettes, retreated to his bedroom. Sometime later he reappeared, carrying several automatic weapons from his private collection.

Striding across the Narayanhiti dining hall, billiards room and into the palace garden, Dipendra's shooting spree wounded five and killed nine including his parents, sister and younger brother. He then turned a gun on himself, but the head wound was not immediately fatal.

King Dipendra's reign lasted one weekend before the ventilator keeping him alive was

**10 December 2007**

Four former Maoists are sworn in as cabinet ministers after a deadlock that began four months earlier when the Maoists walked out of a coalition.

**10 April 2008**

The Maoists win 220 seats in the 601 member Constituent Assembly during nationwide elections.

**28 May 2008**

Nepal becomes a Republic and the 240-year-old monarchy is abolished. King Gyanendra leaves his Kathmandu palace on 11 June.



**4 May 2009**

Prime Minister Prachanda resigns after a power struggle over his sacking of the Nepal Army chief. The Maoists leave government and Madhav Kumar Nepal becomes prime minister.

**January 2011**

A four-year UN peacekeeping mission to Nepal ends. The Maoist fighters remain in cantonments but most weapons have been decommissioned.

**14 August 2011**

Prime Minister Jhulanath Khanal resigns after failing to make progress towards a new Nepalese constitution.



switched off. Gyanendra had been out of Kathmandu on the night of the massacre, something many Nepalese regarded as no coincidence. They resented his automatic ascension to the throne and riots broke out in the capital over the next few days. Even today, rumours and conspiracies persist in Nepal about the royal massacre, that the official inquiry – blaming an intoxicated Dipendra – was a cover-up for something altogether more sinister.

But if many now regarded the legitimacy of the state as having been badly compromised, the Maoist cause drew in more recruits. Moreover, they were now evolving militarily. In September 2001, Prachanda announced the formation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which would have nearly 20,000 members by the end of the war.

Its members were usually young, low-caste Hindus. The PLA was frequently accused of recruiting underage fighters, something Prachanda and other leaders dismissed as enemy propaganda. With a force capable of repulsing any RNA advances, the Maoists set about transforming society in their territories, the so-called 'base' areas.

### From bullets to ballots

As the 2000s progressed, the tempo of the violence increased. Tourist revenues dwindled and foreign investment stalled. Nepal was in danger of becoming a failed state, another hub of warlordism and transnational crime.

In the febrile atmosphere following the 9/11 attacks, the government of George W Bush was hostile to any type of armed insurgency, regardless of its ideology. Thus the US Congress approved the supply of thousands of M-16 rifles to the RNA along with a \$12 million training program.

The Chinese government was a staunch ally of King Gyanendra, even after he assumed direct control in February 2005, suspending Parliament for over a year. Beijing did not need an insurgency boiling indefinitely on the frontiers of occupied Tibet. Regardless of history, China's rulers denounced Nepal's Maoists as 'deviants', subverting the true vision of Chairman Mao.

India's role was more proactive. After Gyanendra's coup, India suspended military aid. Until 2005, New Delhi had been supplying the RNA for 40 years. Indian assault jeeps, trucks and Lancer helicopters formed part of the arsenal deployed against the PLA. These offensives would last a maximum of 72 hours and begin with bombardments, followed by flushing-out operations.

When the seven main opposition parties, sidelined by the royal coup, formed an alliance,



People's Liberation Army soldier Sizon during Taekwondo training. "Just like I kick during my training, we kicked out our King and became the newest Republic in the World"

## “Nepal was in danger of becoming a failed state, another hub of warlordism and transnational crime”

India facilitated meetings between them and the Maoist leadership. This resulted in a 12-point agreement being signed in late 2005 that put the Maoists on the path towards signing the CPA with the government the following year.

But a decade later, the new Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) under Kiran argued that this was a mistake. The prime ministerial stints of Prachanda in 2008-2009 and Bhattarai in 2011-2013 faltered over two issues: the integration of the PLA and the RNA (by then simply called the Nepal Army) and the drafting of a radical new constitution. The PLA eventually went into UN-supervised

cantonments, although the Nepal Army took over their supervision in 2012. About 3,000 PLA guns were decommissioned and ex-combatants were given the option of joining the Nepal Army. In the event, most chose retirement and a government cash package.

The constitutional issue remains unresolved. Many of the socio-economic factors that drove the 1990s generation towards the Peoples' War remain in place. Moreover, there are now thousands of ex-PLA fighters around Nepal, a few of whom could be called upon to train members of any future militant grouping. Whether Nepal's past will also be its future remains to be seen.

**28 August 2011**

Dr Baburam Bhattarai is elected prime minister in an attempt to form a stable government. Previously the main parties had failed to agree to a coalition.

**19 November 2011**

Government monitors present 19,000 former Maoist fighters with the choice of integrating into the Nepal Army or accepting a cash payment and retiring.

**26 August 2013**

A group of about 3,000 former Maoist fighters is formally inducted into the Nepal Army.

**19 November 2013**

Elections see the Maoists under Prachanda thrown into third place, winning just 80 out of 575 elected seats in the Constituent Assembly. Sushil Koirala becomes a caretaker prime minister with the issue of a new constitution unresolved.

**19 March 2014**

Pro-Maoist student activists lead a violent protest in Kathmandu, demanding the government cancel price rises.

**3 August 2014**

India's new Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits Nepal to negotiate a power trade pact.





# SEPECAT JAGUAR

WORDS JACK GRIFFITHS

Climb inside the supersonic ground-attack aircraft that served air forces from all over the world for nearly 40 years

A twin-engine, single-seat jet aircraft, the Jaguar was a joint British and French project to create a supersonic strike fighter/bomber. Developed by SEPECAT, a union of Breguet Aviation and the British Aircraft Corporation, it was the first combined effort to create a combat aircraft by two major European powers. After its first flight on 23 March 1969, 588 were made. It proved immensely popular for other air forces, with the Indian Air Force (IAF) buying 40 in 1978 in a \$1 billion (£664 million) deal. Their lead was followed by the air forces of Ecuador, Oman and Nigeria, who also bought models to bolster their air forces.

There have been many variants of the Jaguar since its inception. The Jaguar A was the first of the breed but it was followed by new and

improved versions such as the M, which was a navy version with unique landing gear and a reinforced airframe.

The Jaguar initially had a limited attack capability but this was soon changed to more advanced roles such as reconnaissance and even tactical nuclear strikes. The jet was devised to replace the rapidly ageing McDonnell Douglas Phantom FGR2 and remained in service for a long period – it was only retired by the French Air Force in 2005 and by the RAF in April 2007. The Jaguar remains effective in modern air combat and is still in use in the IAF. Its combat history is impressive, with the Jaguar having served across the globe in the Gulf War, Balkan Wars, Kosovo War, Kargil War and Cenepa War.

*The SEPECAT Jaguar made its first flight in 1969 and was so popular that it is still used by the Indian Air Force today*





**“THE JAGUAR INITIALLY HAD A LIMITED ATTACK CAPABILITY. THIS WAS SOON CHANGED TO MORE ADVANCED ROLES SUCH AS RECONNAISSANCE, ATTACK AND EVEN TACTICAL NUCLEAR STRIKES”**

SEPECAT Jaguars flying in formation on 29 March 1974



## SEPECAT JAGUAR GR1 XX763

**MAIDEN FLIGHT** 1975

**ORIGIN** UK/FRANCE

**LENGTH** 16.84M (55.3FT)

**WINGSPAN** 8.69M (28.6FT)

**RANGE** 535KM (335 MILES)

**ENGINE** 2 X ROLLS ROYCE TURBOMECA ADOUR MK 104

**SPEED** 1,593KM/H (1,055MPH)

**CREW** 1

**PRIMARY WEAPON** ANTI-RADAR AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSILES, AIR-TO-AIR ROCKETS, GUIDED BOMBS

**SECONDARY WEAPON** 2 X 30MM ADEN CANNON



*The Jaguar could really pack a punch, with weaponry from Matra AS37 anti-radar missiles to AIM-9 Sidewinders*

## WEAPONS

The Jaguar was a force to be reckoned with in combat. Fitted with two rapid-fire 30mm DEFA cannons, the fighter-bomber could strafe and damage ground targets even before it unloaded its missiles. With 4,500-kilogram (9,921 pounds) worth of payload available to the pilot, a variety of armaments can be carried. The Jaguar's speciality was in anti-radar. Most models were equipped with laser-guided Martel missiles and Rockeye cluster bombs to take out ground targets while Sidewinders took care of anything else in the air. Finally, the Jaguar also had the capacity to carry an AN-52 nuclear warhead, representing the trust placed in the machine by its operators.



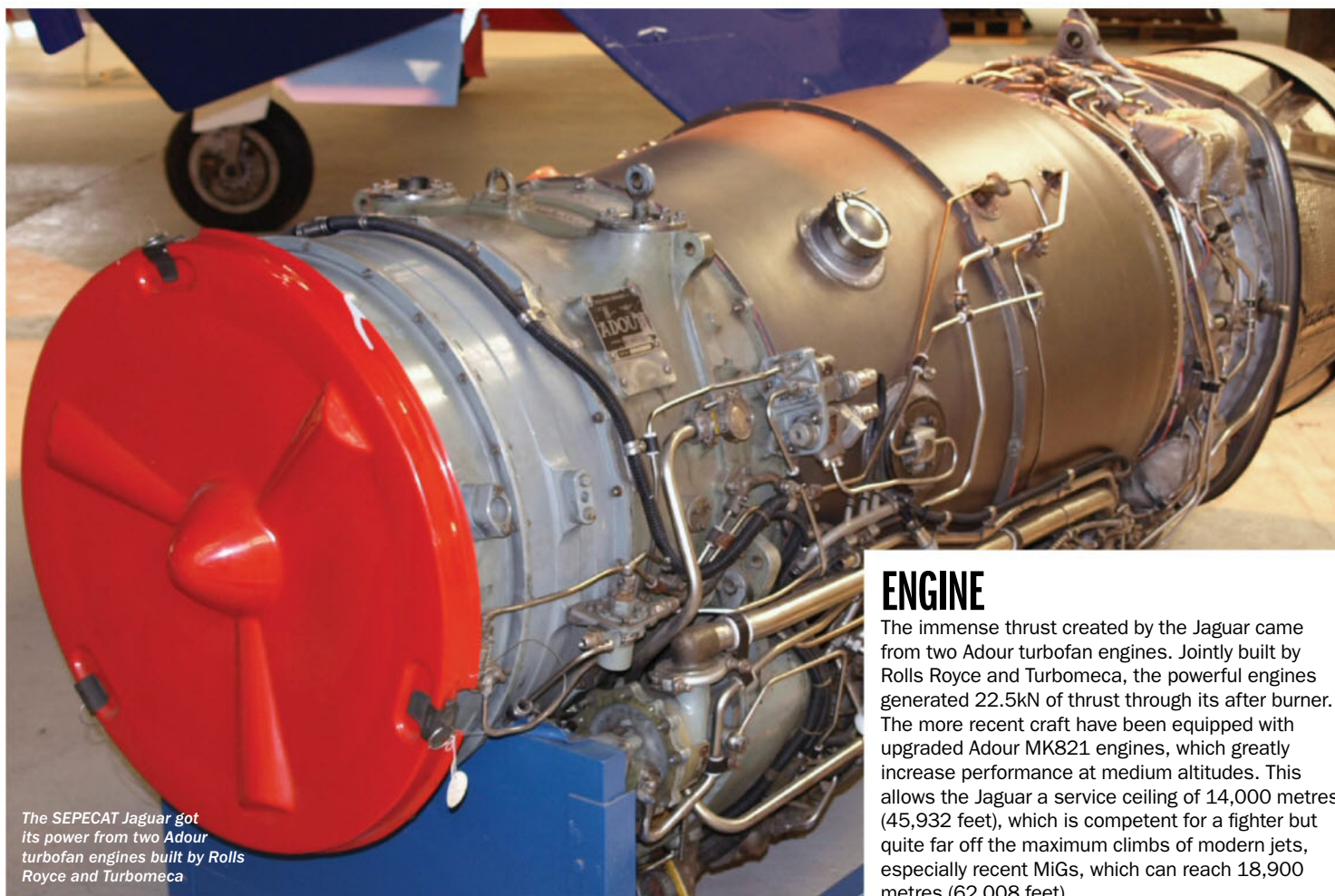
*Missiles and rockets would be released from the side of the aircraft and it could only be seconds until a vehicle or building was laid to waste*



*Most SEPECAT Jaguar models were armed with laser-guided missiles*







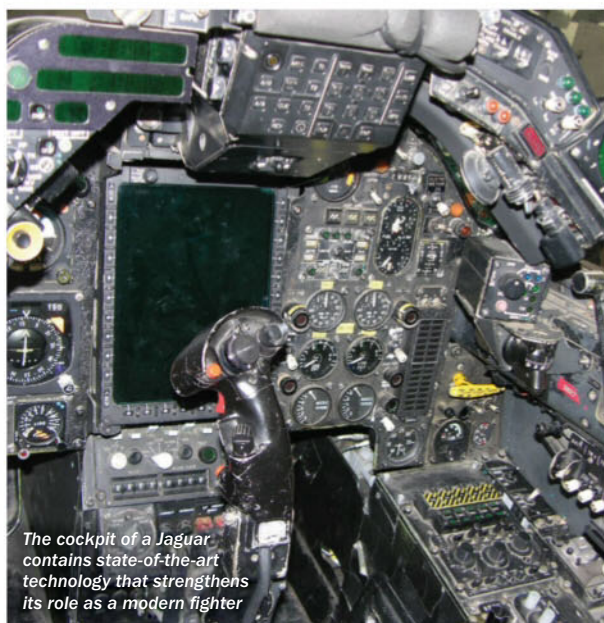
The SEPECAT Jaguar got its power from two Adour turbofan engines built by Rolls Royce and Turbomeca

## ENGINE

The immense thrust created by the Jaguar came from two Adour turbofan engines. Jointly built by Rolls Royce and Turbomeca, the powerful engines generated 22.5kN of thrust through its after burner. The more recent craft have been equipped with upgraded Adour MK821 engines, which greatly increase performance at medium altitudes. This allows the Jaguar a service ceiling of 14,000 metres (45,932 feet), which is competent for a fighter but quite far off the maximum climbs of modern jets, especially recent MiGs, which can reach 18,900 metres (62,008 feet).

## COCKPIT

The control centre of the aircraft, the cockpit of a Jaguar utilised cutting-edge technology for the time. The all-digital cockpit included multi-functional displays with built-in night vision and GPS. This was accompanied by a helmet-mounted display, radar altimeters, navigation systems, automatic direction finder, a weapon-aiming computer and information that helped the pilot distinguish friend from foe. The Navigation And Weapon-Aiming Sub System even allowed the Jaguar to attack enemies without the use of radar.



The cockpit of a Jaguar contains state-of-the-art technology that strengthens its role as a modern fighter

## 20TH-CENTURY SUPERSONIC FIGHTERS WHAT WERE THE JAGUAR'S RIVALS FOR AIR SUPERIORITY?

### MIG-25

Known as the Foxbat, the MiG-25 is just one in a long line of Mikoyan-Guerevich fighters. Immensely powerful, the Foxbat could reach Mach 2.8 but was let down by its thirsty fuel tank. It was primarily a reconnaissance aircraft used to spy on US activity, but could also unleash missiles, as it did in the Iran-Iraq War.



### F-15 EAGLE

The F-15 was so advanced for its time that it is still in use today. Boasting a max speed of twice the speed of sound, it can also hold a huge payload of armaments. It was the premier fighter for the US in the Gulf War, outclassing its rivals in Operation Desert Storm.



### HARRIER JUMP JET

Still the most famous vertical take-off aircraft, the Harrier began life in the RAF in 1969. Its most famous incarnation is the Sea Harrier, which fought with distinction in the Falklands War. The design was ported across Europe to Spain and Italy and it remains in service around the world.





## “THE PLANE’S SYSTEMS COME COMPLETE WITH SPOILERS, AIR BRAKES AND A BULLETPROOF WINDSCREEN”

## DESIGN

Constructed with an aluminium airframe, the Jaguar can handle extreme weather conditions and speeds of up to 1,593 kilometres per hour (1,055 miles per hour). It is equipped with an in-flight refuelling probe that allows the aircraft to be refuelled mid-air. The plane’s systems come complete with spoilers, air brakes and a bulletproof windscreen. In later models of the Jaguar, Ferranti laser rangefinders and marked-target seekers were added to the nose as part of even more advanced armaments. The aircraft is covered in an all-over wrap-round camouflage that helps the Jaguar avoid detection.



*The landing gear's low-pressure tyres retract into the fuselage on takeoff. The IAF initially reported failures, which led to the system being upgraded*

*The aerodynamic and streamline design allows the Jaguar to reach speeds of Mach 1.4*



**“CONSTRUCTED WITH AN ALUMINIUM AIRFRAME, THE JAGUAR CAN HANDLE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS AND SPEEDS OF UP TO 1,593 KILOMETRES PER HOUR”**



## JAGUARS IN WAR



### INDIA

The biggest non-European customer for the Jaguar used the aircraft extensively in the three-year Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka. They were also used to launch laser-guided bombs in the 1999 Kargil War with Pakistan and in an anti-ship role, a function it rarely undertook for the UK and France. They are still in use but there are plans to upgrade them.



### UK

The Jaguar was an effective member of the RAF for many years. It undertook the first bombing raid in Europe since World War II against Bosnian Serb forces and also saw action in the Gulf War, designating targets for laser-guided bombs. It was meant to serve in the 2003 Iraq War but was pulled out after Turkey refused the use of its air bases.



### FRANCE

The Armée de l'Air (French Air Force) utilised the Jaguar in combat operations in Chad, where they supported the country against Libyan forces. The fighter was involved in various operations such as the raid on Ouadi Doum airstrip and also flew for the country in the Gulf War and Kosovo. Jaguars were effectively replaced by the Dassault Rafale in 2005.

## THE BOURNEMOUTH AVIATION MUSEUM

In August 1999, the Bournemouth Aviation Museum was established on the same site as Bournemouth Airport. Originally part of the now defunct Jet Heritage Museum, the centre strives to provide a hands-on experience for all visitors. The centre has 15 aircraft, ranging from military jets to a Boeing 737. It houses aircraft from all eras such as a Gloster Meteor from 1944 and the SEPECAT Jaguar. Visitors are encouraged to jump in the cockpit and have a go in a truly interactive experience.





# BOOK REVIEWS

History of War's pick of the newest military history titles waiting for you on the shelves

## BEYOND THE CALL

**Writers** Lee Trimble & Jeremy Dronfield **Publisher** Icon Books **Price** £20 **Released** Out now

A US AIRMAN IS LURED INTO CARRYING OUT A COVERT OPERATION - TO GO BEHIND SOVIET LINES AND SAVE THE 'LOST SOULS' OF WAR-TORN POLAND

Even in a conflict as vast and destructive as World War II, one man can make a difference – that seems to be the underlying message of this book. And it's difficult to argue. For more than 1,000 US POWs and foreigners stranded in Soviet territory during the final days of the war, one man – Captain Robert Trimble – meant the difference between life and death. His story taps into what's fundamentally appealing about real-life war stories: the courage of ordinary people in truly extraordinary situations.

As the book reveals, Trimble was a man defined not by his outstanding heroics in the war, but by the humility he displayed afterwards. He never spoke of his experiences, and it was only in the five years before his death in 2009 that he opened up to his son Lee, who has painstakingly researched the background to do the story justice. The result is a gripping read that offers fascinating insight into the plight of war-torn Europe as the Nazis retreated and the Soviets moved forward.

By 1945 Trimble had survived 35 bombing missions over Nazi Germany, earning him a 'lucky bastard' award from his squadron mates. He was then coerced into a mission by his superiors that saw him enter Poland, which had been liberated from Nazi rule but was now under the command of the Red Army.

With thousands of Allied POWs, refugees and foreigners abandoned and left to die by the Soviets, Trimble's objective was to go in, circumnavigate Russian intelligence and smuggle the POWs out to safety.

What makes it such an endearing story is Trimble's courage to carry out his mission at all. Ultimately, he was working as a spy, using covert techniques and operating under highly dangerous circumstances, at great risk to himself and many others.

His espionage training included a few quick lectures from the Office of Strategic Service before he was sent into hostile territory. It's a tale of raw nerve, mettle, and wits.

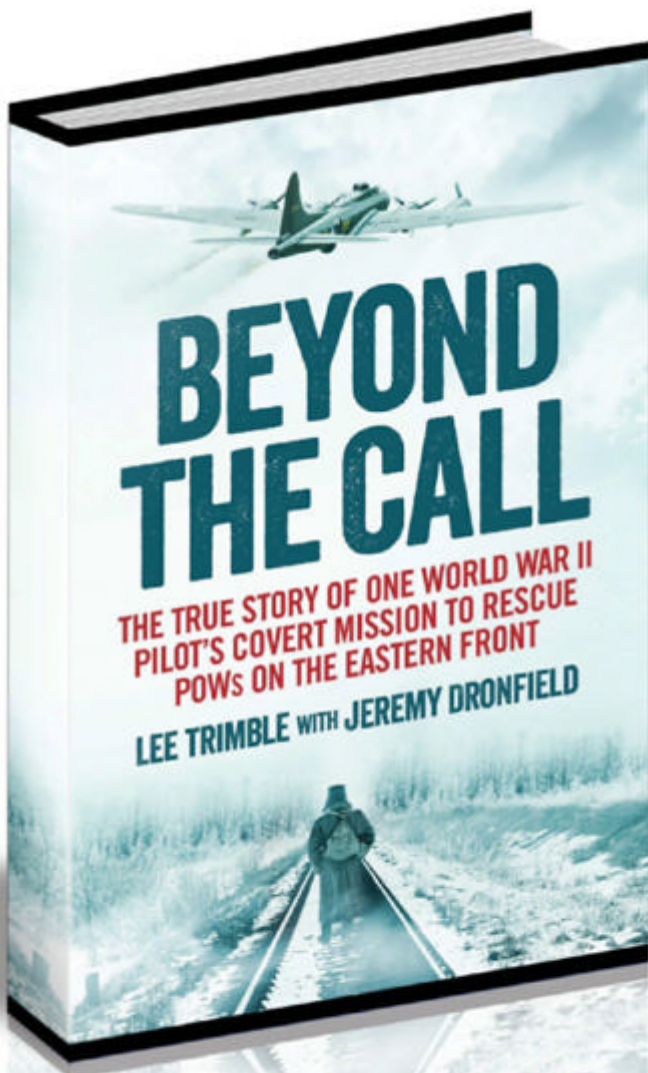
The book also paints a fascinating picture of the difficult relations between the US and Soviets in the closing days of the war. As the Red Army forces the Nazis to retreat and advances across

Poland itself, the country is plucked from one devastating situation into another. It's as if Europe hasn't been saved at all, rather that it's preparing for a new conflict altogether. As the story unfolds, it's not the Nazis Trimble is trying to save these refugees from, but the Russians.

The individual rescue missions make for edge-of-your-seat reading too, particularly one story in which Trimble smuggles 400 French women out of the country in a daring rendezvous with a train. Not all of the missions have entirely happy endings though and there are sobering moments among the excitement – a reminder that real-life adventure comes with real-life consequences.

Overall, it's captivating stuff, detailing one man's courage in a seemingly impossible situation – a brilliantly told story of a true unsung hero.

**“Trimble was a man defined not by his outstanding heroics in the war, but by the humility he displayed afterwards”**



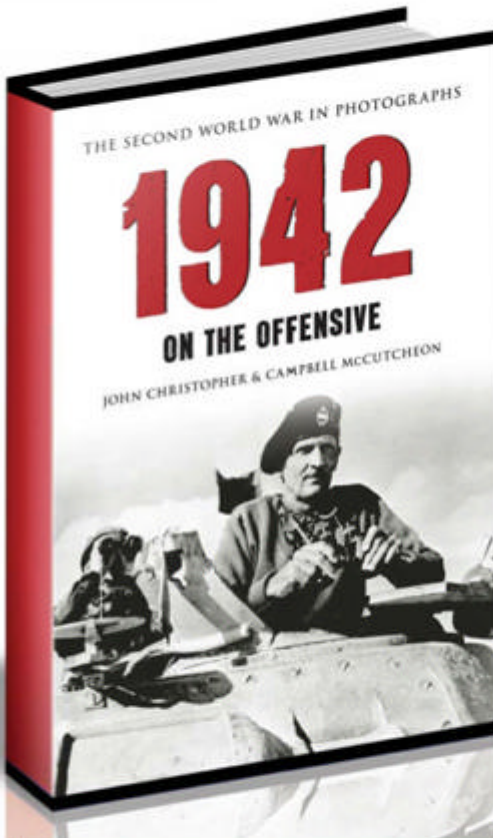
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

## OPERATION CROWHOUND

STEPHEN DANDO-COLLINS

The story of a maverick mission that saw more than 2,000 USAAF military units flown across Nazi-occupied Holland in a bid to drop supplies to starving Dutch civilians.





## 1942 ON THE OFFENSIVE

**Writers** John Christopher and Campbell McCutcheon

**Publisher** Amberley Publishing **Price** £15.99 **Released** Out now

THE BATTLES IN EUROPE, AFRICA AND THE PACIFIC INTENSIFY AS THE WAR TURNS

This is the fourth in the series of Christopher and McCutcheon's study of World War II through period photography. As with previous volumes, this one takes a particular year of the war and examines its events in isolation but, skillfully, without ever wrenching them from the context of the conflict.

It is a refreshing way to look at a much-covered topic, with each year shown to be equally momentous. The previous volume, for example, highlighted how in 1941 – with the invasion of Russia and the attack on Pearl Harbor – the war became a truly global conflict. This, in turn, shows us how 1942 was the year that the Axis powers started to lose the war and the Allies began to win it.

Working chronologically through the months, we begin in January with defeats for Rommel's Afrika Korps in Libya and the Red Army's first major offensive against the Wehrmacht outside of Moscow. This pretty much sets the tone of

the book, which ably demonstrates that 1942 was indeed the turning point of World War II.

It was the year, of course, that saw the Japanese Navy dealt a blow from which it would never recover at The Battle of Midway. It was also the year that the first American troops began to arrive in Britain in preparation for D-Day two years later.

Elsewhere, on the Eastern Front, the Wehrmacht was slowly getting drawn into a venomous trap. By the end of the year the Japanese had all but been booted off of Guadalcanal, Rommel was cornered in Tunisia, while nearly a million men from Germany's Army Group B found themselves surrounded at Stalingrad.

As with previous books in this series, the pictures selected to tell the story tend to focus on the ordinary people who found themselves in such extraordinary times. Their desperate, terrified faces stare out of the past at you.

## BROWNE OFF AND BLOODY-MINDED: THE BRITISH SOLDIER GOES TO WAR 1939-1945

**Writer** Alan Allport **Publisher** Yale University Press **Price** £20 **Released** 28 April  
AN ABSORBING LOOK AT THE BRITISH SOLDIER HEADING TO WAR

This book deserves a standing ovation. It is an entirely wonderful piece of work by a social historian who breathes life into the past with masterful ease. Its subject matter, as the title suggests, is the millions of British men who were sent a letter by the government 70 years ago ordering them to fight – and die – in defence of their country.

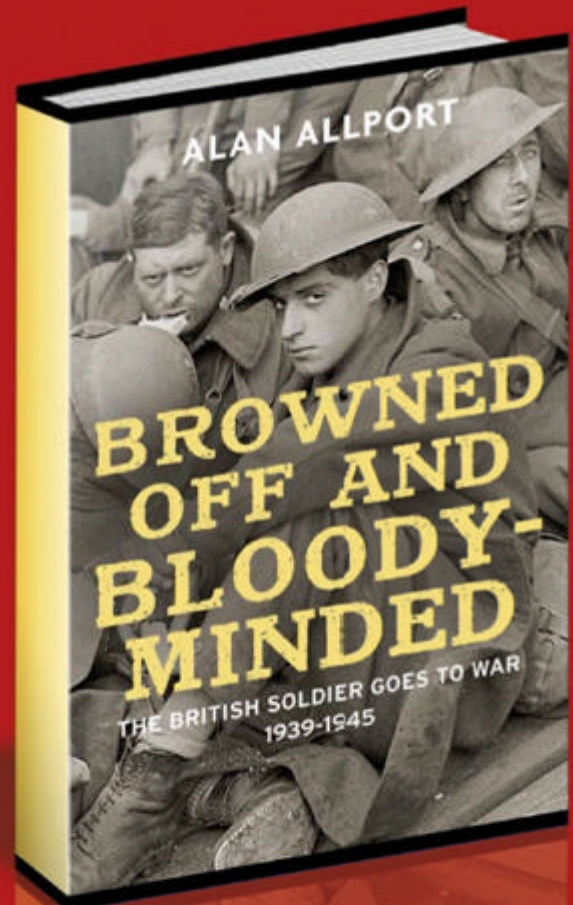
One can only imagine what the response of the British population would be to such a request today, but back then they went. Grudgingly perhaps in some cases, but still they answered the call. They left their jobs in offices and factories and mines. They kissed their wives or girlfriends goodbye. They tousled the hair of their children and walked out the front doors of their homes not knowing if they'd ever see their neighbourhoods again.

More than 3 million of them were called up, sucked into the system,

stuck in a uniform and spat out all over the world. Men brought up on Britain's rainy streets suddenly found themselves in jungles, deserts, or in shattered foreign cities. And regardless of where they fought, the enemy these civilian conscripts found themselves facing was often fanatical, politically indoctrinated and prepared to die for their particular flavour of fascism.

The British soldier's response to this, as Allport's book so exquisitely reveals, was to go about his business with grumpy good humour, a fair bit of class resentment and a splash of period racism. The first-person accounts Allport unearths are by turns outrageous, shocking, hilarious and touching. A great history book needs to entertain as it informs and this work does on almost every page. *Browned Off And Bloody-Minded* is bloody marvellous. Highly recommended.

**“The first-person accounts Allport unearths are by turns outrageous, shocking, hilarious and touching”**



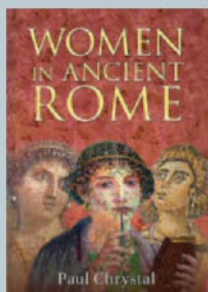


# ALL ABOUT HISTORY

## RECOMMENDED READING

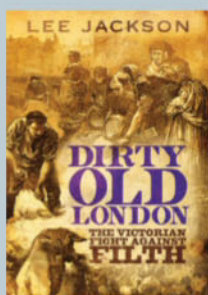
### WOMEN IN ANCIENT ROME (AMBERLEY)

With firm objectivity and a pleasantly factual address, the reader is guided through a fascinating overview, presented with evidence and facts, and left to draw their own image of life for women at this time.



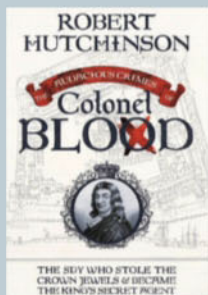
### DIRTY OLD LONDON (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

Dusting off tales of grit and grime never told before, this book offers a unique glimpse into life at the height of the Industrial Revolution, shining a spotlight on the unsung heroes of 19th-Century waste disposal.



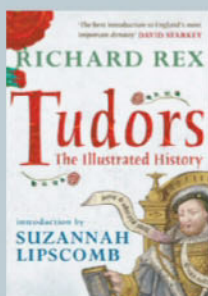
### THE AUDACIOUS CRIMES OF COLONEL THOMAS BLOOD (WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON)

The exciting life of Colonel Thomas Blood, the only man who ever stole the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London, is recounted in this informative, if somewhat hard-going, book.



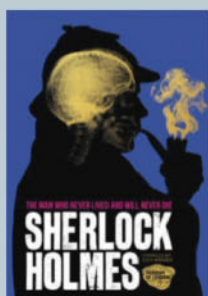
### TUDORS: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY (AMBERLEY)

An excellent introduction to this revolutionary period, this book takes you on a journey through the reigns of all Tudor monarchs, examining their motivations, contributions and often somewhat dubious actions.



### SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE MAN WHO NEVER LIVED AND WILL NEVER DIE (EBURY PUBLISHING)

This collection of essays, photos and illustrations focuses on the elements of reality behind the fictional sleuth, adding context with regard to Doyle's own life.



# DEFENDING THE MOTHERLAND

THE LITTLE-KNOWN TRUE STORY OF THE SOVIET WOMEN WHO WENT TO WAR IN THE SKIES

**Writer** Lyuba Vinogradova **Publisher** MacLehose Press

**Price** £12.99 **Released** 2 April 2015

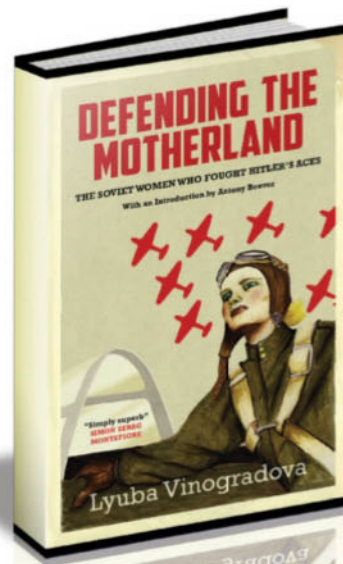
This book tells of the extraordinary heroism of a group of Soviet pilots and aircrew that the Germans nicknamed die Nachthexen – or Nightwitches. The 80-odd fliers in question made up the 586th Fighter Regiment, the 587th Heavy Bomber Regiment and the 588th Regiment of Light Night Bombers, and they all had one thing in common – they were all female. They also comprised the first all-female combat units in modern history.

The story of this remarkable group, who between them flew well over 20,000 sorties between 1942 and 1945, has been pieced together by Russian writer Lyuba Vinogradova. Vinogradova is probably best known for her work with Anthony Beevor in bringing legendary Soviet War correspondent Vasily Grossman's notebooks to life in the excellent *A Writer At War*. In *Defending The Motherland* she again uses primary source material to transport us into the past.

Drawing on interviews with the surviving airwomen, as well as diaries and the memories of those who knew them, she presents an epic tale of young women at war. It is a tale that

plays out against the backdrop of a critical moment in Russian history, as the country almost collapses after the initial German invasion, but then rallies its forces to first halt the Wehrmacht's seemingly unstoppable advance, and then drive it back.

The women pilots who played their part in that, as this book demonstrates, not only had to fight the Luftwaffe's battle-hardened aces but predictable prejudice from their male leaders as well. In the end though, the Nightwitches emerged victorious, helping to both send the Nazis packing and prove that they were every bit as capable as any man in the Soviet military. They were every bit as brave too, as both the large number of medals they won and comrades they lost definitively proves.



## “Vinogradova presents an epic tale of young women at war”

Marina Raskova, a famous Soviet navigator, is commemorated on a postage stamp





# FIVE CAME BACK

HOW THE FACTS AND THE FILMS HAVE INTERTWINED OVER TIME

**Writer** Mark Harris **Publisher** CanonGate **Price** £14.99 **Released** Out now

Subtitled 'A Story Of Hollywood And The Second World War', this engrossing book by Mark Harris could almost be made into a film itself. It's certainly got most of the ingredients you'd need – a great mix of strong characters, oodles of conflict, a sprinkling of suspense and stacks of great action scenes.

It tells the story of five of America's greatest ever film directors – John Ford, John Huston, George Stevens, William Wyler and Frank Capra – as they freeze-framed their Hollywood careers in order to help the US war effort.

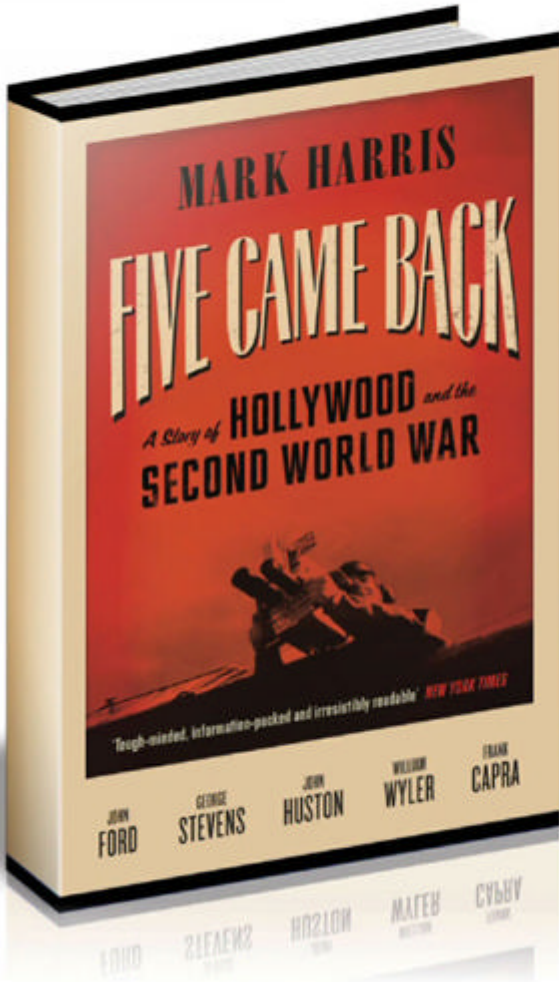
Spurred on by the attack on Pearl Harbor, the men, all in their late 30s or 40s, volunteered for military service, offering to make the propaganda films that could help win the war. The US government responded by handing over almost complete control, allowing them to make movies in combat zones with a level of creative freedom never witnessed before or since.

And so it was that these men, who walked away from all the luxuries and comfort that Tinseltown's A-list lifestyle offered, found themselves dodging bullets in the Pacific, North Africa and Europe. Harris documents their war and the films they made in effortlessly thrilling style, peppered with intriguing insight.

He draws the five directors as very different men, too. Ford is the hard-drinking Irish American. Huston is portrayed as a reckless playboy, Stevens as a loner, and Wyler as a complex craftsman. Finally, there is Capra – who would go on to make the definitive US propaganda films of the era with the *Why We Fight* series – cast as the insecure genius.

What they all had in common, however, was a lust for adventure and desire to serve. As Ford put it, none of them could live with themselves if they'd sat out the war "in mockie-land while the good people are fighting." Utterly absorbing.

**“A great mix of strong characters, oodles of conflict, a sprinkling of suspense and stacks of great action scenes”**



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NEXT MONTH:

# FALL OF THE THIRD REICH

HITLER'S LAST DAYS, THE FALL OF BERLIN  
AND THE FINAL DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY



# WAR IN NUMBERS

## THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN

Striking statistics from one of war's biggest miscalculations

94,000

▲ Horses and mules were evacuated out of Helles Cove

▼ ANZAC losses on the first few days after landing at Gallipoli

643

62%

of New Zealanders were killed or wounded

▲ Victoria Crosses were awarded to the ANZAC troops after the campaign



▼ Australia had been a nation before engaging in Gallipoli

33 40% 14 YEARS

▲ Commonwealth cemeteries now stand on the peninsula

40%

of Australian males aged between 18 and 45 enlisted in the AIF

392,856

▲ The approximate total number of casualties for both sides in the eight-month campaign





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